





THE
L I F E
OF
ST. ALOYSIUS GONZAGA:
OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN
OF
FATHER VIGILIUS CEPARI;
OF THE SAME SOCIETY.

3337
THE TRANSLATION, REVISED
BY A CATHOLIC CLERGYMAN.

PHILADELPHIA.
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1884.

WE approve of the republication of the **LIFE OF ST. ALOYSIUS GONZAGA**, revised by a Clergyman of this diocess.
Given under our hand at Philadelphia, this 3d May, 1841.

† **FRANCIS PATRICK KENRICK**,
Bp. Arath and Coadj. of Bp. of Phila.

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TO THE READER.

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FATHER VIRGILIUS CEPARI, the author of this Life, was cotemporary with Saint Aloysius, and enjoyed the advantage of spending several years with him in the Roman College of the Society of Jesus. A long and familiar intercourse with the Saint afforded him time and opportunity of knowing and appreciating the sanctity of this admirable youth. He was, moreover, remarkable for gravity and virtue. He relates with simplicity what he saw and knew; and wrote under the eyes of a thousand witnesses, who, as well as himself, were guarantees of the truth of all he advances, however extraordinary it may appear. Few histories then can be said to present an equal degree of certainty and authenticity, even in the least of its circumstances.

The devotion to Saint Aloysius has become so general, especially amongst young persons, and so many have expressed a desire of having his Life re-printed, that we consider ourselves performing a task grateful to the public, by presenting a new edition of a work so edifying and so interesting. The errors and inaccuracies of former editions are here corrected, while the substance and spirit of the original are preserved.

Such is the work which is now dedicated to the public, and particularly to those young persons, who, amidst the almost universal deluge of vice and infidelity, still preserve respect for religion and a love of virtue. Chris

tian youth, take then this little book, and peruse it with attention. It is to you, in particular, that His Holiness Benedict the XIIIth proposes Aloysius Gonzaga, as a perfect model of Innocence and Sanctity, by appointing him your Special Patron. He is a saint of your own age, who performed the duties which you now have to perform, and who sanctified himself by doing what you do at present. Read, then, and learn from him to preserve, even in the midst of the world, an angelic innocence and purity; learn to combine the most lively and affectionate piety with the most constant application, and the most brilliant success. Read, and see how he learned to unite with the most tender and respectful love of his parents, inflexible firmness in pursuing the way in which God had called him: observe the esteem in which he held the observance of silence and recollection, obedience and humility, mildness and charity. Learn from his example, that sanctity belongs to every age, and to every state of life; that you may aim at it, and attain it, even from Childhood; in College, as well as in your parents' house; in the highest as well as in the lowest condition of life. In fine, let the life of your amiable Patron teach you how important it is to give yourself early to God, and the loss you must sustain by spending in dissipation and folly, an age in which virtue and sanctity may merit eternal crowns of glory.

THE LIFE

OF

S. ALOYSIUS GONZAGA.

BOOK I.

SAINT Aloysius Gonzaga, prince of the house of Mantua, was son of Ferdinand, Marquis of Chatillion in Lombardy, and of Martha de Tane, a lady descended from one of the best families of Quiers in Piedmont. They were married at the court of Spain, in the reign of Philip II. and of his queen, Isabella; Ferdinand being in great favour with the king, and Martha enjoying a distinguished place in the queen's household. This marriage was remarkable for being the first that was celebrated in Spain conformably to the decrees of the Council of Trent, which had lately been received in that kingdom; and we may believe that this fortunate circumstance contributed not a little to draw down those extraordinary blessings, with which God was pleased to honour so holy an alliance.

The chief fruit of these blessings was Saint Aloysius, born at Chatillion, whither the prince and princess had retired from court. God manifested upon this occasion, that so fine a gift came more immediately from the hand of his providence than that of nature; for the marchioness was so

exceedingly ill at her lying-in, and had such difficulty to bring forth her child, that the physicians gave her up. In this condition, having no hopes of the preservation either of her own life or that of her babe, but in God alone, she asked leave of the prince her husband to make a vow in honour of the blessed Virgin, and with his consent promised to pay a visit to the holy house of Loretto, and carry the child with her, if it should please Heaven to favour her with a happy delivery.

That vow was scarcely made when she began to grow better, and presently after was delivered. This child of prayer came into the world upon the ninth of March, in the year 1568. He was baptized immediately, and afterwards received the name of Aloysius, from William Duke of Mantua, then head of the Gonzaga family.

The Marchioness of Chatillion was one of those ladies, who place the pleasure of life in the performance of their duty, and are persuaded, that of all their obligations, one of the most essential is, that of giving their children a proper education; so that the young prince was no sooner capable of receiving instruction, than she began herself to give it to him; and being of a devout Christian disposition, the first thing she taught him was to say his prayers, a lesson which the holy infant learned so quickly, that before he was four years old, he was perceived to retire to private places and hide himself to pray. It was likewise observed in this tender age, that he showed an extraordinary inclination and compassion for the poor; insomuch that he never met them without pitying them, and giving signs that he desired to do them good. A turn of mind so extraordinary no sooner began to

show itself, than every one looked upon him as an angel of heaven, clothed in infant flesh ; and many have declared, that they felt an unusual sense of devotion while they carried him in their arms.

The virtuous mother was charmed to bring up her son in these sentiments of piety : but the father, who was a soldier, desired to see him like himself, and omitted nothing that might contribute to that end. His son was hardly four years old, when he ordered him to be furnished with arms of every kind, all proportioned to his age and stature ; and being obliged to spend some months at Casal, where he was to raise three thousand men for the service of his Catholic Majesty, who was then preparing a formidable expedition against Tunis, he took Aloysius from the care of his mother, and appointed him a governor with orders to accompany him. No review passed in which Aloysius did not make his appearance, pike in hand, and with his coat of mail. The child was diverted with these exercises, and the pleasure of the son was no small satisfaction to the marquis ; but it had like to have cost both the one and other very dear. For as children are fond of mimicking whatever they see done by others, Aloysius was more than once in danger of killing himself by fire-arms, which as yet he knew not how to manage. One day he burnt his face in letting off a musket ; another time, having taken some powder from the pouches of the soldiers while they were sleeping in the afternoon, he rammed it into a field-piece, which stood upon the town-rampart, and set fire to the touch-hole. The wheels of the carriage recoiled upon him, and he narrowly escaped being crushed to death : the marquis, wakened by the report of

the cannon, at first apprehended some quarrel among the soldiers, but was soon surprised to hear it was the bold action of his little Aloysius. It could not naturally excite his displeasure, yet, being a prudent man, he thought proper that he should be punished to prevent farther mischief; but the soldiers, pleased to see such spirit in an infant, interceded in his favour, and obtained his pardon. These accidents enkindled afterwards in the heart of the holy child a most lively gratitude towards God, as soon as he was old enough to be sensible that he must inevitably have perished, unless a very particular providence had preserved him.

The marquis having completed his levies, and being ready to depart for Tunis, restored Aloysius to his mother, who still resided at Chatillion. Here it was first perceived that among the licentiousness of the soldiery he had picked up some unbecoming expressions: but such was his docility to the first word of his tutor, that he never stood in need of a second admonition. Though he uttered these words without well knowing what they meant, yet he found herein during his whole life a continual matter for repentance. One would think God had permitted him to fall into this fault, that afterwards his humility might remain untainted amidst those stupendous favours with which he designed to visit him.

He was now just entering upon his seventh year, when he gave himself so entirely to the service of God, that, as Cardinal Bellarmin has authentically deposed, his life, even in that tender age, never varied from perfection: Aloysius himself dated his conversion from that period, and always reckoned it amongst his greatest blessings that he had begun to know and love God at so early an age. He had

now certain times appointed for prayer; and he was so punctual in the observance of them, that even in a quartan ague of eighteen months, which had considerably weakened him, he was never known to have omitted them.

Such was the life which Aloysius led when his father returned from Tunis, since which expedition he had passed two years at the court of Spain. He was well pleased to find such prudence and sedateness in him, whom he had left full of fire and vivacity; and now thought himself secure of an heir capable of maintaining the dignity of his family. Full of this hope, he spared no pains in his education, and resolved to send him, young as he was, far from the sight of home, notwithstanding all the entreaties urged by the princess to the contrary. Being obliged about this time to repair to Lucca on account of the waters, he took Aloysius and his second son Rodolphus in his company, and, upon his return to Florence, left them at the court of Francis de Medicis, Grand Duke of Tuscany. This prince received them with great kindness, and would have appointed them an apartment in his palace, but the marquis, desirous that they should apply to their studies while they paid their attendance upon the court, thought proper they should have a separate house in town, more remote from distraction.

Aloysius made so great progress in the service of God during his stay at Florence, that afterwards he used to say, very justly, this city had been his mother in piety. In particular, his devotion towards the Blessed Virgin became now so fervent, that he made a vow of chastity, believing he could do nothing more acceptable to the Mother of God than imitate her in the practice of this virtue—a thought

for which he was indebted to a little treatise upon the mysteries of the Rosary, written by Father Gaspar Loartes of the Society of Jesus. Our Blessed Lady showed in a very singular manner that this vow of her client was ratified ; for, by the concurring testimony of his confessors, he never experienced any of those indeliberate and involuntary motions, from which even eminent sanctity does not always preserve the just. It must be said at the same time, that he used the most accurate precautions to maintain this virtue in its greatest perfection : for we shall soon find him in almost continual prayer, and practising austerities even beyond the measure of discretion, amidst the distractions and pleasures of a court.

During his stay at Florence, he confessed to the rector of the Jesuits, and approached the sacred tribunal oftener than he had been hitherto accustomed. He made a general confession of his whole life ; but in the very beginning of it, the vehemence of his contrition overpowered him, his voice began to falter, a flood of tears followed, and the next moment he fainted away at the feet of his confessor : he afterwards continued and finished it, but with such diligence and accuracy, that, as he often has been heard to say, he himself was satisfied with the success of it. There he learned to enter into the knowledge of himself, and distinguish the different motions of his heart. The first thing that claimed his notice was a propensity to anger. He had indeed made himself so far master of this passion, that nothing appeared in his exterior ; but some remnants still lay lurking within, which sometimes discomposed the serenity of his soul. He likewise remarked that in conversation he had now and then

dropped some words against his neighbour, which, though not indeed very considerable, appeared not quite consistent with the nicest perfection of charity. The reader can scarcely imagine how warmly he applied himself to the correction of these blemishes. He often placed anger in its blackest colours before his eyes, considered what a shameful passion it was, and what a folly for a man of sense to throw himself into a condition in which he could no longer answer for what he did. About the same time he began to withdraw himself from the conversation even of his most intimate friends, and seek after solitude, that he might find the kingdom of God within him. Several took it amiss that a young prince should be brought up in that manner, which seemed to them rude and too far remote from the politeness of the world: but he paid no deference to their way of thinking; and, steadfast in the task he had undertaken, forbade himself all sort of gaming, and observed it inviolably ever after. Eleonora de Medicis, who was afterwards Duchess of Mantua, used to relate of him, that whenever she and her sister, the princess Mary, afterwards Queen of France, but then about the same age as Aloysius, invited him to play with them, he always found some means to excuse himself.

He had now drawn upon himself the eyes of the court and city, equally astonished to behold such virtues in a child, when the Marquis of Chatillion, being named Governor of Montserrat by the Duke of Mantua, was desirous that his children should pass to the court of his benefactor. It was natural for Aloysius to be a little dazzled at so near a view of the grandeur of his family; but the event proved quite the contrary. For, as if the splendour o

temporal dignities, by being now showed in a clearer light, had appeared the more contemptible the court of Mantua was the very place in which he took the resolution of renouncing his right to his estate, and consecrating himself to the church, not with a design of pursuing ecclesiastical preferment, which he ever constantly refused, but out of a desire of serving God with greater liberty. Accordingly, without intimating any thing to his father, he desired to be withdrawn from court, under pretext of applying the better to his studies : and the ill state of his health obliged the marquis this summer to call him back to Chatillion.

His paternal house, where other children of quality so often find their ruin, was to Aloysius a fit school of the most eminent perfection. He learned, indeed, under the best of masters, the Holy Ghost himself, deigning to instruct him in the principal article of a spiritual life, by visiting him with the gift of prayer : for, though he had never been taught either the means or practice of meditating, he was, on a sudden, elevated to a most sublime contemplation ; at the same time his soul was enlightened in a very extraordinary manner, and overflowed with such an abundance of consolation, that he was continually drowned in floods of tears, and the very floor was often wet with them when he rose from prayer. From this time it became his only delight, and he spent in it not only whole days, but often a considerable part of the night : sometimes he was found prostrate before a crucifix with his arms stretched out, weeping and sighing in a most tender manner ; sometimes quite calm and quiet, his body immovable, and his attention so absorbed in God, that nothing was able to call it off.

Though the unction of the Holy Spirit was such that Aloysius stood in need of no other instructions, yet he neglected not to apply himself to the common rules of mental prayer. He made use of a little collection of meditations by Father Canisius, (which chanced to fall into his hands,) with singular profit on this occasion ; thus neglecting nothing that might contribute to a faithful correspondence on his part, that the Holy Ghost might continue to supply whatever depended on his grace.

His prayer, though almost continual, did not hinder him from applying to the exercise of those works of charity which were proper to his age ; he instructed the ignorant in the articles of our holy faith, he employed all his zeal to banish vice out of his father's family, and maintain peace and concord among the servants ; he even admonished those of their faults, who behaved ill, but with such mildness and good manners, as rendered him more amiable even to those whom he reprehended ; he seldom talked of any thing besides God, but of him he talked in such a manner, that many found a satisfaction either to hear him discourse, or entertain him themselves upon that subject.

About this time Saint Charles Borromeus arrived at Chatillion, in his visit of the diocese of Brescia, having been commissioned by Gregory XIII. to visit the bishoprics of his district. He had a long conference with little Aloysius, from which the holy cardinal reaped inexpressible satisfaction ; he could never sufficiently admire such a profusion of heavenly favours, and such perfection in a child only twelve years old ; the child, on the other side, was out of himself with joy, that at last he had found a man to whom he could unfold all the secrets of his

neart, and by whose light he could conduct himself securely; and he revered as so many oracles whatever came from his mouth.

Amongst many other things, the saint advised him in particular to study the Roman Catechism,* and make himself master of the fundamental articles of his religion, to make his first communion as soon as possible, and after that to communicate often; teaching him, at the same time, how he was to prepare himself, that he might reap due fruit from so sacred an act. Aloysius punctually performed every article of the saint's advice; and after he had made his first communion, he was observed to be so sensibly devout towards the Blessed Sacrament, that the priest had no sooner consecrated, than he shed such floods of tears, that the ground on which he knelt was watered with them.

After that time his fervour grew daily more intense, and the spirit of mortification joining itself to that of prayer, he conceived such a hatred against himself, that in a short time it entirely got the better of his health. He fasted three times a week, and often only upon bread and water: he ate exceeding little, and that always of the very worst things he could get: for the chastisement of his body, he made use of such instruments as would have appeared shocking to the most austere religious. he disciplined himself till he was all reeking with blood, and many times very visible marks have been found thick upon the floor. He often slept upon the boards, and having no hair-shirt at hand, wore

* This was published by the order of the Council of Trent. It is not, as might be supposed from its name, an elementary work; but one of great depth and learning.

round his body a girdle thick studded with the rowels of spurs. He never warmed himself, even in the most sharp winters: sometimes in the middle of the coldest nights he rose from bed, and in his shirt threw himself in the middle of the room upon his knees to pray. The cold, as he owned afterwards, distracted him a little in the beginning, but his application to his prayers soon got the better and rendered him insensible to the inclemency of the weather. He confessed, nevertheless, that his strength often failed him in this exercise, and though resolved not to sit down, yet incapable of kneeling upright, he was obliged to let himself fall at length upon the floor, and in that posture he continued his prayer. But in his riper years he blamed these excesses as indiscreet. No pain could induce him to apply remedies to those evils, of which no consequence was to be feared but suffering. Thus, when they gave him an ointment to cool and mitigate the inflammation of his hands, which suffered considerably from the cold, he received indeed, but never used it. His intense application had brought on a very violent headache, which lasted as long as he lived; he no sooner perceived it was no impediment to the performance of his duty, than he did whatever lay in his power to render it still more violent, and even incurable, thinking himself very fortunate in suffering a torment, which in some manner resembled the crown of thorns of Jesus Christ.

God, who purified the heart of Aloysius by this holy hatred of himself, and suffered it now and then to pass the bounds of discretion, watched over his preservation with a paternal solicitude. One day, going with the princess his mother to mee-

his father at Casal, as they were passing the river Ticinis at a ford, the coach broke asunder. His brother Rodolphus was in the forepart, and the horses soon dragged him safe out, leaving Aloysius and his governor, who sat backwards, in the middle of the stream, and in imminent danger; for the current carried away the other half of the coach, and it seemed impossible to give any assistance to those that were in it. But Providence had not abandoned Aloysius. The body of a great tree which lay across the river stopped the part of the coach, as it was swimming down the stream, and gave time to his retinue to come up, one of whom rode in, and brought him safe to land, where his first business was to repair to the next church upon the road, and return God thanks for his preservation.

Another time, while he lived at the castle of Châtillon, being obliged by a headache more violent than ordinary, to go to bed, he reflected that he had not satisfied his daily custom of saying the penitential psalms: desirous to acquit himself of this duty before he fell asleep, he called for a light and dismissed the servant who brought it. When he had finished his prayers, he forgot to put out the candle, which stood close to his bedside, and fell asleep. In the mean time the bed took fire, which, before he was sufficiently awake to see what the matter was, spread itself all over the curtains and bed-clothes, but after a very extraordinary manner; for it burst not out, till, almost stifled with heat and smoke, he had thrown himself out of bed to call for help. The next moment every thing was in flames, and would have been burned, if the soldiers who were upon duty, had not run up in time, and

thrown the bed out of the windows, into the castle ditch.

The experience which he had from these several accidents of the particular protection of Providence, inspired him with a very lively confidence in God; he abandoned himself so entirely to his conduct, that even in those concerns which lay nearest his heart, his prayers seldom requested any thing besides the execution of what was most conformable to his divine will. He said he had never asked of God any thing which he had not obtained, nor cast any affair into the hands of Providence which had not succeeded according to his wishes.

One of the greatest miracles that divine Providence ever worked in favour of Saint Aloysius Gonzaga, was the preserving of his heart pure, and his innocence untainted, amidst the several courts in which he passed those tender years, which childishness and a levity common to that age render so terribly exposed to the allurements of evil.

He had seen most of those in Italy, when the Empress Mary of Austria, daughter of Charles V., and wife to Maximilian II., passed through Lombardy on her way to Spain, upon a visit to her brother Philip II. The princess desiring the Marquis and Marchioness of Chatillion to accompany her, the marquis resolved to take along with him three of his children, Aloysius, Rodolphus, and his daughter Isabella.

They went part of the way by sea: upon which occasion Aloysius gave a specimen of a more than ordinary courage; for the alarm one day being given, that they were in danger of being taken by the Turks, he cried out in a transport of joy: "O! would to God we may have the good luck to fall

into their hands, and meet with the crown of martyrdom."

At the court of Spain he was admitted among the children of honour to Don James, where he remained above two years, applying himself closely to the study of logic, natural philosophy, and mathematics, and made a considerable progress in those sciences. He was only fourteen years old when an opportunity offered itself of showing the superiority of his parts. As he was passing by Alcala upon some occasion, they invited him to a public defence of divinity under the celebrated Vasques, afterwards his professor at Rome; the dispute was about the Blessed Trinity, a matter which seemed far above his years; but the progress he had made in philosophy, and the diligence with which he had studied the articles of his religion, enabled him to speak with a strength and subtilty which was applauded and admired. But his literary talents now seemed eclipsed by his virtues; for he soon drew upon himself that universal admiration which constantly attends wisdom so superior to his age, and a piety still more exemplary. One day the young prince finding the wind very troublesome as he was looking out of a window, lost patience, and by a sudden fancy, common enough to children, ordered the wind to trouble him no more. Aloysius, who stood by, made use of that occasion to put the prince in mind of the fear of God, and gave him a short lesson, which was afterwards reported to, and much extolled by, the king:—"Sir, you may command men, but the elements only hear the voice of that God whom you yourself must obey."

While the court was in admiration at his fervour he alone found sufficient reason to reproach himself

with negligence. For his studies, together with the several duties of an active courtier, had induced him to approach the sacraments less frequently, and retrench considerably the time formerly allotted to his daily prayers. But he soon perceived by the abatement of his fervour, and a certain careless disposition, which insensibly gained ground and weakened his good resolutions, that God expected greater things at his hands. He was no sooner sensible of this, than he resolved to keep no longer any measures with the world, but in spite of human respects throw aside whatever might become an obstacle to the most faithful correspondence with the graces he had received from heaven. Lewis de Granada's treatise of meditation fell into his hands just in a proper time to enkindle his former flame. The reading of this book induced him to make that singular purpose of never rising from prayer till he had passed an hour therein without a distraction; so that by beginning over and over anew, he sometimes continued it for five hours without interruption. He retired often to the most lonely corners of the palace, and where he imagined they would never think of looking for him, that he might not be interrupted in his communications with God. The marquis was often displeased that his son never appeared in company; but he as well as others were at last obliged to yield to his constancy. Every one looked upon him as an extraordinary person, superior to the ordinary ways of life; and it was a common saying at court that the young Marquis of Chatillion was not made of the same flesh and blood as other men. He was so modest, that, although he went with the young prince every morning to pay his respects to the

empress, yet we have learned from his own mouth that he never once looked her in the face. He was fond of plain clothes, and never appeared in a rich suit but upon those occasions which made it absolutely unavoidable: and so far did his modesty carry him in this particular, that the vocation to a religious life, which now began to discover itself among all his other virtues, having inspired him with the spirit of poverty, he seemed even to fall short of what was but decent in a person of his rank.

God had long been soliciting and drawing Saint Aloysius Gonzaga towards a religious life. Egypt was not a place for this faithful Israelite. He was to advance far into the desert, and there offer a pure sacrifice to the Lord, remote from the company and commerce of the uncircumcised. He was only eight years old, when, often hearing his mother say, she should be glad to see one of her children take to religion, he answered her resolutely, that he hoped he himself might be the person. These first thoughts, then superficial, grew stronger upon him during his residence at Casal, by his acquaintance with the Barnabites and Capuchins. He admired in these holy men a sovereign contempt of whatever the world thinks estimable: and that joy and peace of heart which sat upon their countenances, had charms in his eyes which he was not able to resist. He took delight in the discipline which he saw observed by them, in the silence which reigned through their convents, and that austere air of sanctity which characterize them. "Behold, Aloysius," he often said to himself, "a most happy place, where, far from the occasion of offending God, this mortal life is spent in laying up merits for a better

Passions give not the law within these walls, reason and virtue hold the sway, and profound peace accompanies them. Nobody is ambitious here, nobody desires to be rich, nobody envies the happiness of his neighbour; their only thought is how to serve and please God, and all they desire is to be beloved by him. What is there that can prevent you from enjoying that treasure, of which you have found the value? What can you resolve upon better in your present design of consecrating yourself to God? Will you embrace those honours which your birth gives you a right to expect in the service of the church? Alas! that would only be changing one danger for another. Will you serve the church without aspiring to the dignities of it? The ambition of your family will continually be rising in opposition, nor will you be quite secure from those very dangers you design to avoid. When every point has been maturely considered, you will find that the most advantageous resolution is to break at once every tie which binds you to the world: this step will set you at liberty, and in a condition of serving God in peace."

Such were the considerations that induced Aloysius to form the design of embracing a religious life; but his choice, as yet, had fallen upon no particular order; for being then only thirteen years old, he thought it better to defer the decision of that point, till he should attain the age requisite for his admission. He now took his last decisive resolution during his stay in Spain. A spirit of mortification and austerity, which was very strong in his heart, made him at first incline towards the discalced Carmelites; then his zeal threw him into doubts, whether it were not better to enter into one

of those ancient orders, which were fallen from their primitive observance, and endeavour to reform it. At last, four reasons determined him in favour of the Society of Jesus : first, because it retained its primitive fervour : secondly, because it renounced by vow all ecclesiastical dignities : thirdly, because, in its colleges, youth was instructed in learning and the fear of God : fourthly, because it laboured in foreign missions for the conversion of heretics and infidels. Though Aloysius had duly weighed these considerations, and was sensible of the effect they had upon his mind, yet, that he might the more clearly discover the will of God, he still suspended his final determination till he had received the Holy Eucharist, upon a feast of our Blessed Lady, confiding that she, who had hitherto ever been propitious to him, would now enlighten and guide him in so important a deliberation. He was not frustrated in his hopes ; for, upon the Assumption of our Lady, while he was making reflections after communion, and beseeching the Almighty, through the merits and intercession of his blessed Mother, to manifest his will, he heard a voice, clear and distinct, telling him, that the will of God was, that he should enter the Society of Jesus ; at the same time bidding him go to his confessor, who was a father of that society, and relate to him what had happened. Aloysius obeyed with joy, nor was his confessor less glad to hear what an illustrious member God had destined for his order ; however, he acquainted the bearer of so agreeable a message, that the superiors would never think of admitting him till he had obtained the consent of the marquis his father.

Aloysius, full of impatience and fervour, flies immediately to the marchioness, his mother, and tells

her his design. That virtuous princess, whose feelings for her children were more sublime than those which spring from flesh and blood, answered him by thanking God for having thought her worthy to offer him such a sacrifice, and undertook herself the task of making the first proposals to the marquis. But he, a man who looked upon his son with a worldly eye, showed not the same promptitude in acquiescing to the orders of God. He flew into a passion, threatened him with the worst of treatment, and though this heat cooled by degrees, yet he left no arts untried to prevail upon him to change his resolution. After having vented the first fire of his resentment, he fancied this might be a contrivance of his son to make him enter into himself and withdraw him from gaming, which was his predominant passion, and had very lately swept from him a considerable sum of money. At other times, reflecting that it was the marchioness who had opened the proposal, he began to suspect she might be fonder of Rodolphus, and, therefore, desirous to remove his brother. The proceedings of the younger prince soon dispelled these suspicions, and showed him clearly, that the sole motive of his design was the desire of serving God. But this conviction produced no alteration in his conduct, and he still continued to employ every artifice to retain his son; persuaded, as worldlings are accustomed to inculcate to those whom they would dissuade from religion, that a Christian may save his soul in any state or condition of life. He even engaged F. Francis Gonzaga, general of the Franciscan friars, afterwards bishop of Mantua, who, at that time, was visiting the houses of his order in Spain, to second his endeavours: but this holy

man was of sentiments very different from his relation, and all that the marquis could obtain from him was to examine the vocation of Aloysius, after which he entirely approved of his design.

While things were in this state of agitation, Prince James died; Aloysius thought this a proper juncture to put his resolution in execution, and, accordingly, having paid the last honours to his deceased master in the Escorial, repaired to the fathers of the Society of Jesus, and thence sent a message to the marquis, to let him know that he was determined never to quit them; that the day of their separation must come at last, and that it might as well be that as any other. But this stratagem failed: for the marquis insisted upon his coming back, alleging, that were he even to give his consent to his being a religious, it should never be in Spain, since he was then upon the point of returning to his own estate, and had resolved to take back the family along with him. Andrew Doria, to whom Philip had lately given the command of his galleys, was ready to set sail for Italy. The marquis and his family embarked on board the fleet.

Aloysius was no sooner arrived at Chatillion than he renewed his entreaties; but the marquis, hoping to wear out his patience by continual delays, told him he must first pay a visit to every prince in Italy; and, having assigned him a numerous equipage, he sent him off in company with his brother Rodolphus. This was artfully contrived by the marquis, and the most powerful engine he could possibly apply to produce an alteration in the former resolution of his son: for it was natural to imagine, that, by the fatigue and distraction of travelling, he would grow insensibly more remiss in the

practice of prayer and penance, and that then his mind would be laid open to the repeated attacks of those pleasures, to which the heavenly joys he had found in retirement at home had made him hitherto insensible. But the precautions of Aloysius secured him against the danger, and Heaven protected him as a signal example to those who, destined by fortune for something great in this life, are called by God to be eminent in the next. The journey produced no alteration in his way of living: while Rodolphus and the retinue appeared in clothes adapted to their rank and character, Aloysius wore a black suit of Flanders serge. His thoughts were running almost continually upon God. Prayer was his chief occupation on the road, nor did the fatigues of his journey seem to him a sufficient reason to dispense with his accustomed fasts, or to retrench from his ordinary devotions. When he came to an inn, he immediately withdrew to some private corner, and falling upon his knees before a crucifix or cross, which he had scratched upon the walls, spent one or more hours in prayer: in towns, when he had paid the necessary compliments to the nobility, he repaired to the college of the Jesuits, where he immediately desired to be led to the church to visit the blessed sacrament; and during his stay used often to seek for an innocent amusement in the conversation of the religious.

Nor were occasions wanting in which his virtue displayed itself in a more signal manner. While he stayed at Turin to see the Duke of Savoy, Jerom de la Rovere, his relation, who was afterwards cardinal, begged him to occupy an apartment in his house, and the saint willingly accepted the offer

Among the young gentry, who came to pay him their compliments, there happened to be an old man of seventy, who had the boldness in such company to drop some loose and pernicious maxims. Aloysius, upon hearing him, felt a motion of indignation, and giving away to his zeal, told him, "that such discourse was very unbecoming one of his age; that if he had any shame left he would never pretend to teach libertinism to young men of their quality, and advised him to remember the saying of the apostle—evil communication corrupts good manners." After these smart words he threw open a book which happened to lie at hand, and having looked in it a little, rose up and retired. Every day exposed to the occasion, and very often solicited to be present at comedies, assemblies, or other diversions, he always found some means to absent himself, persuaded that the poison enters without our being sensible of it at the eyes. Modest and recollected, he had made a contract with them not to behold vanity. Hercules of Tane, brother to the Marchioness of Chatillion, having heard of Aloysius's being at Turin, paid him a visit in person, and invited him and his brother Rodolphus to spend some days at Quiers. Aloysius thought he ought not to refuse so kind an invitation from one to whom he owed respect. Upon his arrival he was received with a magnificent entertainment, and when that was over he perceived preparations were making for a ball. His first project was to withdraw if possible, unnoticed; but, upon consideration, he openly begged to be excused, declaring that he had no liking for such diversions, and that it would be much more agreeable to him to be left entirely at liberty. But his

friends would hear nothing upon that head, and were so warm in their solicitations, that at last, though not without great difficulty, he consented to be a mere spectator, and accordingly entered the assembly-room, where he had been expected with impatience. He was scarcely seated when a lady advanced towards him and invited him to dance, but he was positive in his refusal, and thinking he had carried his complacency far enough by having appeared in the room, presently withdrew and concealed himself where he imagined they would not easily discover him. Hercules soon perceiving he was gone, sought in every corner in order to expostulate gently with him, and prevail upon him to return to the assembly. But all his endeavours to find him were to no purpose. The saint was in prayer between a bed and the wall, and God, by a plentiful communication of heavenly joys, made him ample amends for those pleasures which he had sacrificed for his sake.

Such was the situation in which Hercules found him, as he chanced to pass by upon other business, without any thoughts of looking for him. Seeing the young prince upon his knees, and lost as it were in God, he stopped in a moment of astonishment, and his nephew's conduct ceased to appear blameable. Sensible of the visible operations of divine grace, and fearing to disturb such an intimate union with God, he withdrew, full of awe and respect. Aloysius had now finished his circuit, and hoped that his obedience in an affair which his desire to follow the call of God had rendered so disagreeable, would at last extort a compliance from the marquis, but he was surprised to find at his return, that he was just in the same situation as

before. The marquis was more positive than ever in his refusal, and Aloysius at the same time, for an aggravation of his misfortune, saw himself attacked on all sides with importunate remonstrances from every prince that was any ways allied to the family. The Duke of Mantua deputed a bishop to represent to him, that if he were determined to leave the world, he ought at least to aspire after something suitable to his birth, and made very ample proffers of his interest in seconding his pretensions to the highest dignities in the church. But these importunities only made him the more impatient to be gone. In his present disposition, indifference or even contempt would have been more agreeable than those professions of kindness with which they overpowered him, and that extraordinary regard which they testified for his person. The marquis still continued inexorable, and far from complying with the wishes of Aloysius, left no means untried that might induce him to yield to the entreaties of a father. Sometimes he used threats, then again kindness and caresses; but every effort proved ineffectual. At last, overpowered by the longanimity of the young prince, and stung by the reproaches of his own conscience, for thus resisting the will of God, so manifestly declared, he submitted to the fatal sacrifice. It was one day, when after some conversation upon this subject with Aloysius, he had ordered him with much warmth to be gone out of his sight, and they had found him soon after upon his knees before a crucifix mingling his blood with his tears, that he might the more effectually obtain of God what was so obstinately refused him by man. The marquis had been immediately called to be an eye-witness of the spectacle; struck with

the sight, he thought it barbarous any longer to withstand such ardent resolutions. The marchioness, indeed, long before this had perceived the great austerities practised by her son, and declared, that to let Aloysius enter religion was only to preserve his health and even his life; it being impossible he should hold out long, and treat his body as he did; but that in religion, superiors and the rulers of his order would moderate his fervour. The marquis, moved by these considerations, wrote to Scipio Gonzaga, then patriarch of Jerusalem, afterwards cardinal, desiring him to present his son to the general of the Society of Jesus, and ask him at the same time, what place he judged most proper for his noviceship.

We may easily imagine the transports of Aloysius, when he had at last obtained what he had been so long suing for in vain. He would have embraced the poverty of Jesus Christ without delay; but the concerns of his family obliged him to go through all the forms of law requisite for the renunciation of his temporal dignities and estate. The marquisate of Chatillion is a fief of the empire, and Aloysius, having already been invested with it, it was requisite that the emperor should grant it to Rodolphus, and consent to the surrender made in his favour. While this was treating at Vienna, the marquis had other business at Milan, and left the management of it to Aloysius. The proof which he gave of his eminent abilities on this occasion, only served the longer to obstruct his happiness. The emperor had consented to his abdication, but the marquis had never felt himself more sensibly attached to his son, than when he was on the point of losing him. His anxiety now suggested an ex-

pedient, which put the resolution of Aloysius to a severe trial, and such as nothing but heroic magnanimity, supported by a particular grace, could surmount: he suddenly repairs to Milan, and surprising him by his presence when he least expected it, attacked him with all those arms, which an excess of grief and love can supply. He endeavoured to dispel his fear of his salvation; showed, that the commandments of God might be fulfilled in every state; that his virtue could never desire a finer theatre whereon to display itself, not only for the good of himself and family, but of those whom God intrusted to his government; that heaven had visibly blessed him in every circumstance; that he was loved and honoured by the neighbouring princes, and adored by his vassals; he urged the necessities of his family; that his brother was young and too wild to be intrusted with the management of affairs, or the reputation of the family: finally he conjured him in the most pathetic terms to take pity on a poor father; that he was going to leave him an old man and in the utmost distress, afflicted with continual infirmities, and so weakened that he was grown almost a burden to himself: that now he stood in the utmost need of an assistant, and God had given him one in the person of his son, who, by his violent hurry to retire from the world, abandoned his old age to care and misery, and that he would hear in a little time he had sent him to his grave. A flood of tears, which the old marquis poured forth, continued still to plead more powerfully than words in the breast of his son; but he answered resolutely, that he had already weighed all those difficulties, that no consideration upon earth could ever have induced him to withdraw himself from the service

of his father and family, had not Heaven so manifestly declared its will to that effect ; that its orders admitted of no reply ; that the concerns of his family were under the care of that Providence which commanded him to renounce them, and would never suffer them to receive any detriment from obedience to its vocation. But the marquis still continued with greater violence than ever to renew all those artifices he had used before. Learned men of every state were employed to examine and try the vocation of his son. Aloysius, having once again surmounted these obstacles, hoped at least that this trial would be the last ; but not relying too much on this, he prepared himself against fresh attacks by a spiritual retreat, which he made under the conduct of the Jesuits as he passed by Mantua. He spent fifteen days in close solitude, prayer, and penance ; nor was a remarkable conjuncture which at that time took up the attention of the town, able to draw him one moment from his retirement. The ambassadors of the kings of Japan were daily expected at Mantua in their return from Rome, whither they had been sent to acknowledge the pope's supremacy in the name of that flourishing church, which the successors of S. F. Xavierius had established in the remotest regions of the east, and everybody was preparing to receive them with the greatest pomp, that they might carry back to their masters a high idea of the magnificence of Europe.

He was scarcely returned to Chatillion, when he found that his apprehensions were but too well grounded. One day as he was pressing the marquis to grant him the leave he had promised, he was surprised to see him put on suddenly an unusual air of authority, and to hear from him these words .

“You were under a mistake, young man, when you imagined I should consent to the choice you have made. It will be time enough to think of those matters, when you are five-and-twenty years of age. Go and take your measures accordingly.” This declaration was a thunderbolt to Aloysius; and the marquis rendered it more terrible by following the blow, and insisting upon an immediate answer to several proposals which he made, without even allowing him time to consult the general of the society. In this nice and delicate conjuncture, he thought the step attended with the least inconvenience, was to consent that his admission into the society should be suspended to a certain time then determined; upon condition, nevertheless, that during that time he should reside at Rome, and the marquis should give the general his word, that when he should pass through this one trial more, no farther obstacle should be thrown in his way. He added, at the same time, that they were not to imagine that this compliance of his proceeded from any inclination to concur with their designs, contrary to his former resolutions and to the call of God; that if at the expiration of the term agreed upon, they still should have sufficient interest to hinder the Jesuits from admitting him, he would travel about a wanderer upon the face of the earth, sooner than live in the enjoyment of a fortune, which he was convinced it was the will of God he should renounce. These words, delivered with greater liberty than ever he had presumed to take before, made an impression on the marquis; so that, though the two proposed conditions obstructed his designs, yet, sensible they were just, and fearing his son might be hurried to some extremity still more disagreeable, he thought it best to acquiesce.

While they were debating what quarter of Rome was most proper for his lodging, and what figure he was to make during his stay there, one day, after having passed four or five hours in prayer, entreating God, like another David, to shorten the time of his sojourn in a place where he did not serve him with that perfection he desired, on a sudden he found himself inspired to repair to the marquis, who was then confined to his bed by a violent fit of the gout, and make a final effort to obtain his consent. The young saint, not doubting but that this thought proceeded from the Holy Ghost, immediately rose from prayer, and repairing to the apartment where the marquis lay, he delivered himself in a tone which, though respectful, was animated with a force he had never before exerted: "Sir, I come to assure you, that I shall always be very submissive to your orders: dispose of me now as you think proper: but I declare that God calls me to the Society of Jesus, and that, while you oppose the execution of my design, you resist the will of God himself." Having spoken these words, with unusual emotion, he withdrew without waiting for answer, and left the marquis pierced with sentiments to which he had been hitherto a stranger. The stings of his conscience and an excess of grief tormented him at the same time. In the vehemence of the agony he turned himself towards the bedstead, and endeavouring in vain to conceal it from his attendants, wept bitterly. But grace and the fear of God at length getting the better, he ordered Aloysius to be called in, and told him: "Son, you have given a wound to your father's heart, which will bleed for many a day: I am fond of you, and it is but what you deserve: I had grounded all the

hopes of my family upon you ; but since you are convinced that Heaven has other designs, go, my son, obey that call ; I detain you no longer : God grant you may live happy in that state." Ferdinand could support it no longer ; he burst into tears ; so that his son, fearing his presence might aggravate his anguish, thanked him in few words and retired to his chamber, where, prostrate on the floor, he gave thanks to the Father of lights for the inspiration which he had given him, and the success with which he had been pleased to accompany it.

As the tenure of the patents granted by the emperor required that the demission of Aloysius should be made in the presence of the princes allied to his family, who were to succeed to the marquisate in case of failure in the branch of Chatillion, Ferdinand thought it most convenient to assemble them at Mantua, where many of them had houses of their own.

The inhabitants of Chatillion were sensibly affected at the news of his departure, and some of them even took the liberty to remind him that, being beloved by all the world, and happy in a plentiful fortune, it seemed odd he should think of a change. Aloysius answered, that he was desirous of enjoying a crown in the other life, and found, that to possess one in this, and save his soul, was a task superior to his strength ; that nobody could serve two masters ; that, for his part, he was determined to insure his salvation, and advised them to do the same.

The ceremony was performed in a full meeting of the princes of the Gonzaga family, at the close of which, Aloysius surprised them all by making

his appearance in the habit of a Jesuit. A spectacle so uncommon, and the discourse with which the young saint accompanied it, drew tears from the eyes of all present. He was heard with the greatest attention, while he told them how difficult a matter it was; especially for great and rich men, to live in the world and save their souls; that the gifts of fortune were vain and perishable, and that in a business of such consequence as salvation, no security could be too great. His whole auditory was much affected with that air of conviction with which he delivered himself upon these great truths. The next day he took his leave of the duke, the duchess, and court, and with the blessing of the marquis and marchioness, set off for Rome, with a retinue which consisted of a governor, a chaplain, a physician, and six or seven servants. His brother Rodolphus accompanied him to the river Po, where they embraced each other and took leave. Upon this occasion, one of the attendants telling Aloysius that he believed Rodolphus was well pleased with what he had done, he answered in a manner which showed how sincerely he slighted all worldly grandeur; "I assure you I find greater satisfaction in renouncing it, than he will in succeeding me." At Ferrara he paid a visit to the duke of that name, who was his relation, and intended likewise to pass by Florence, in order to take leave of the grand duke, who had a great affection for him; but the apprehensions they entertained of the plague communicating to those quarters, rendering it difficult for travellers to procure a passage, he thought proper to bid him farewell by letter. From Ferrara he went to Loretto, and thence to Rome, where having taken an apartment in the house of Scipio

Gonzaga, the first thing he did was to go and throw himself at the feet of the general of the society, telling him that he was come to petition what he had promised him before, a place among his children. After this visit, he made several others to such of the sacred college, as decency required he should pay his respects to, and in particular the cardinals de Medici, D'Este, and Farnese. He was next presented to His Holiness, Sixtus V., and had the honour to kiss his sandal. The pope received him with great tokens of kindness, and asked him, whether he had maturely considered the step he was going to take, and had foreseen all the obligations and hardships of the state he designed to embrace. The young saint answering, that he had the pope commended his good designs, extolled his courage, and dismissed him with his blessing.

After this audience, Aloysius found himself in disposed, and at first apprehended this illness might oblige him to defer his admission, but to his great joy it had no farther consequences : so the next day, which was a Sunday, he received the blessed sacrament at the professed house, and on Monday, the feast of St. Catharine, in the year 1585, and 18th of his age, he was conducted to the noviciate by Scipio Gonzaga, who now, by a nearer communication with the saint, had been witness of his singular endowments, and loved, esteemed, and admired him. Aloysius had no sooner set his foot into the house, than turning round to his attendants, after a short exhortation to apply diligently to the business of their salvation, he dismissed them. He told his governor to return by the way of Leghorn, and pay his respects to the grand duke. He desired the chaplain to deliver his last farewell to the marquis

in these words of the psalmist: "Think no more of thy family, nor of thy father's house;" to signify to his father what he had said already to himself: he charged another of the company to give his duty to the marchioness; and one asking him, whether he had nothing to say to his brother Rodolphus, he desired that in his name he might be told this verse of Scripture, "He that fears God will do good works." Having delivered these little commissions to his former attendants, who were all in tears, he heard mass, and received the blessed sacrament from the patriarch. After which that prelate gave him his last embrace with many tears, and then committed him to the master of novices, who conducted him to the chamber prepared for him. Aloysius entered it with the satisfaction a man finds in gaining a secure haven after a storm, and broke forth into the words of the psalmist, "*Hæc requies mea in sæculum sæculi: hic habitabo, quoniam elegi eam.*" (Ps cxxxi. v. 14. "This is my rest forever and ever here will I dwell, for I have chosen it.")

BOOK II.

AT our entrance into religion, we meet, as the people of Israel formerly met on entering the land of promise, enemies whom we must encounter and overcome, before we can live happy in the peaceful possession of that country, which, according to the Scripture expression, overflows with milk and honey. Aloysius had a singular advantage in this respect; all was quiet and peaceable around him: his heart was already cleared of those passions which wage so violent a war with others; the only care now left was to perfect himself in those virtues, which he had brought from the world, under the direction of obedience, which, in his case, was rather a curb to restrain, than a spur to excite fervour. Nevertheless there happened in the very beginning of his noviceship, an incident which put his faith and fortitude to the test. God had so continually replenished him with the streams of his bounty, that he had hitherto been a stranger to desolations and aridities: but he had scarcely entered on his religious career, when, to his great surprise, he found those fountains dried up which once had supplied him so plentifully; the former tranquillity of his mind was now changed to anxiety and sadness: but although such a sudden alteration proved a sensible affliction to the unexperienced novice, it neither got

the better of his courage, nor rendered him more remiss in the performance of his duty. He praised the Lord in this night of desolation, as he had done before in the sunshine of his caresses; and he manifested now, that amidst the former affluence of heavenly favours, God himself had always been the object of his desires. In this anxious state of mind he never turned aside in pursuit of those comforts that men can give, but after the example of the royal prophet, he sought for an alleviation of his grief only in the remembrance of his God, and at length, by these means, regained tranquillity: for he had observed, at the very beginning of these troubles, that as soon as he began his prayer, all sadness left him, and returned again upon him when he had finished. But the time of these trials soon passed; God then restored to him his primitive peace of mind, continued to visit him with such a profusion of delights, and enlighten him after so extraordinary a manner, that, as he owned himself, all his endeavours to correspond with them were vain, the illustrations he received constantly surpassing the utmost efforts of his fervour.

This attack, which proceeded from God, who sometimes is pleased to try the firmness and resolution of his servants, was followed by another, which was evidently the artifice of a very different spirit. An apprehension rose, the motive of which probably was his sickly constitution, that he would be but an unprofitable subject to his order. But he soon discovered who was the author of such suggestions, and as soon got the better of them. After a strife of half an hour, he gained a complete victory, and remained clear of the attempts of his spiritual enemy ever after; for he declared these were the

only temptations he met with during the whole time of his noviceship.

The fervour with which he spent every moment of that precious season, and the improvement he made in virtue, show that he ran the road of perfection with ease, and met with few obstacles to retard his progress. He seemed indeed to be threatened with one in the delicacy of his constitution; for experience has often shown, that this is a pretext both obvious and specious for tepidity. But Providence has given the weak an example in the person of Aloysius, and a proof that courage can suffice, even if strength should fail, for the performance of their religious duties. For though his health was quite ruined before his admission, and afterwards it grew worse and worse, till at last it carried him to his grave; though this illness was aggravated by a violent headache, and that still accompanied by other ailments, yet his fervour enabled him to support all the fatigues of a most exact religious life, as if in perpetual health and vigour. He knew so well how to join the study of those great virtues requisite to an apostolical life with the nice observance of domestic discipline, that though conformably to his rank either of novice or scholar, he seemed wholly applied to the practice of minute duties, yet he showed even now that the people might reasonably hope to see him one day perform great things for the glory of God and reputation of his order. This was the sentiment of Father Jerom Platus, author of the celebrated work upon the happiness of a religious state.

His first care and study after his admission was to conform his life to the rules of the society; he had learned, he said, from his father, that a man

ought to make himself perfect in whatever profession he had embraced ; and being persuaded that the rules of the society were the most secure guide to this perfection, he was, his whole life, scrupulously exact in the observance of them. Obedient to the very letter, he might even seem in this regard to have carried his punctuality too far, were it not manifest that it proceeded neither from a contracted or illiberal mind, nor want of judgment, nor that anxious nicety which generally springs from those defects in little souls, but from a perpetual fund of diligence, in seizing upon every occasion to render himself more and more acceptable in the sight of God. This spirit of regularity, indeed, sometimes led him into extremes ; but they were set off with such an air of sanctity, that nobody could take them amiss, and adorned with so many virtues, that whatever he did contributed to increase the universal esteem and admiration. One day, paying a visit to Cardinal de la Rovere, his near relation, his eminence invited him to dinner ; Aloysius was sensible that such invitations from persons of that rank admit of no reply, but at the same time reflecting upon the rule which forbade him to eat any thing abroad without the superior's leave, he immediately alleged it to the cardinal, and desired to be excused. The prelate was much edified at his conduct, and after that never made any proposal to Aloysius without adding the clause, if it be not contrary to your rule ; —apprehensive, he said, of bringing such a tender conscience into difficulties, and putting an obstacle to the operations of the Holy Spirit in a heart so sanctified and pure. Another time, he told the same cardinal, who was going to engage in conversation with him, that he had no leave, and left him,

not displeased at his simplicity. This ruling principle of fidelity made him apply in a particular manner to a very exact performance of the most minute duties : nothing appearing in his eyes trivial that was done for God. He once told an intimate friend, F. Bernardin de Medicis, a person more commendable for his virtue, than the splendour of his illustrious family, that he found a sensible call to this fidelity, in little things, and that it was a virtue requisite to make progress in perfection. Yet he looked upon the practice of it only as a disposition to others more material, according to the words of Christ, "he that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in that which is greater." *Luc. xvi. v. 10.* He knew how to distinguish what is essential to perfection from that which is only accidental, and was far from falling into the error of those, who, placing sanctity in the exact discharge of minor duties, neglect the study of solid virtue, and nourish inordinate passions in their hearts, while their weakness lies concealed under a regular and religious behaviour. Convinced, therefore, that he ought so to divide his application between greater and lesser things, as not to neglect these, while he made progress in the others his chief concern, he now closely applied himself to the practice of mortification, humility, poverty, obedience, zeal of souls, and charity towards his neighbour, and disposed himself after this manner for that intimate union with God to which he was elevated. He was so deaf to the world, to all satisfaction and pleasures of his senses, that he might truly say "his life was hidden with Christ in God,—that he was crucified to the world, and that the world was crucified to him." He had so entirely cast away all remembrance of what he

had left therein, that being asked one day how many brothers he had, he was forced to reflect a moment before he could answer : and when an inhabitant of Chatillion came to interest him in an affair then upon his hands, he told him that he had no longer any business with the concerns of this world.

Nothing gave him a more sensible mortification, than to be put in mind, that he was born to something greater than other men. The physician who attended him in an illness, at first imagined he should please him, by talking of the splendour of the family of Gonzaga ; but he soon perceived, from the uneasiness and trouble expressed by Aloysius, that he had not taken the right method to ingratiate himself with his patient. The frequent occasions to which his birth exposed him of being troubled with the like discourse, made him almost conceive an aversion for the very name. Master of all his passions, his heart seemed to have divested itself of every sentiment but one,—a dissatisfaction at the superiority of his birth. The same nicety discovered itself at whatever was said in his commendation ; one day, having made a public discourse in the refectory to some bishops during their entertainment, he told those who congratulated with him for the honour he had acquired upon the occasion, that he believed he had done nothing that day, but given before good company a remarkable instance of his having a thick tongue.

Aloysius did not think it enough to entertain a mean opinion of himself within his own breast : we may say that he was willing even to oblige others to have the same. He desired that no one might bear him a particular affection, nor could he suffer the thoughts of receiving from his superiors

any particular mark of their kindness or concern. So that when any one, who was a stranger to his sentiments, in this particular, testified a regard for him beyond that of common civility, instead of answering, as is natural, by a due return of kindness and complacency, he appeared troubled and confounded. Being weak and infirm, he had been appointed to sit at a particular table, destined for the convalescents; but the apprehension he lay under, that this might be allowed chiefly out of a regard to his birth, made him so uneasy, that his superiors thought better to let him return to the common diet. Upon this occasion, when some represented, that unless he made use of this indulgence, he would be in danger of falling sick, he replied that he was to live in common with the rest of the community, and that he was nowise concerned about whatever illness might be the consequence, as long as, in following regular discipline, he varied not from the obedience due to the will of his superior.

Aloysius carried his humility to that degree found only in apostolical men, and so recommended by St. Ignatius, in his constitutions, as to desire to be contemned for the love of God, and to resemble Jesus Christ the more. This spirit made him find a singular satisfaction in the performance of the meanest offices, and desire that even strangers should see him actually engaged in such employments. Somebody having asked him, after he had been over the town begging in an old and worn cossack, whether he had found any repugnance in that day's work, he answered, no!—that he had set before his eyes the example of Jesus Christ, and the reward promised to those who tread the world under foot for his sake; and that these considerations softened

whatever was repugnant in such humiliations. He added, at the same time, that they were not so mortifying as people generally imagined; for if those he met knew him not, it mattered not what they thought of him; if they knew him they must needs have been edified, to see a person born to some fortune in the world, despise it all for the sake of imitating Jesus Christ. From this same principle flowed likewise the pleasure he found in being reprehended for his faults. He often entreated his superiors to do it in public, and declared that whenever they did him this charity, the only sentiment he felt, was indignation against himself for having committed them. He never excused himself, though charged with failings of which he was not guilty. The director of the novices at the professed house, the more to divert him from that continual application to prayer, which did considerable prejudice to his health, had ordered him to continue recreation with those who dined at the second table. One of his superiors, who knew nothing of this order, having found him at it, gave him a public penance. He performed it without reply, and the next day remaining still at recreation as he was ordered, he received again the same penance. But several being disedified at his seeming to take so little notice of what was told him, he was obliged, in order to prevent further scandal, to discover the reason he had for doing so; he added, that though he doubted before whether he ought not to allege it, yet he had said nothing, fearing it might only be an illusion of self-love, always seeking after an excuse and pretence to escape humiliation.

To this spirit we may ascribe the custom he had of always taking the lowest place: when he walked

out to the country-house in company with other religious, he always insisted upon their going before him, so that his superiors thought proper to tell him this was troublesome to others, and that his civility put them to the blush. It appears, from a writing found among other papers after his death, that he looked upon the love of esteem as his weakest side, and for that reason, applied so vigorously to the practice of humility. "Since the devil generally attacks you with temptations to vainglory, your chief, or rather your continual endeavour ought to be to resist him with the arms of humiliations and self-contempt." One day, being sensibly afflicted at having received a better cassock than he desired, some one then in his company bid him take care his dissatisfaction proceeded not from self-love, and an affectation of poverty. Aloysius examined himself strictly upon this article; but all that sagacity, which God had given him in the knowledge of himself, could never discover any of those inordinate principles. He acknowledged that in the beginning of his noviceship, he had not been quite free from these suggestions, but by the grace of God he had always overcome them; and that to render his success more secure, having made the passion of our Saviour the subject of his meditation for some months, he had turned all his reflections to that one point of rooting out of his heart the most subtle remnants of self-love, and implanting therein a holy spirit of self-hatred, and self-contempt.

Aloysius saw too clearly how easy it is for the poor in spirit to be humble of heart, and was too sensible of the connection between humility and evangelical poverty, not to have a particular affection for this virtue. Fond of it formerly while in

the world, and among the great ones who abhor it, we may easily imagine how much more fond he was of it in religion, and among those who love it. He was persuaded that every Jesuit ought to feel a singular attachment to this virtue, which S. Ignatius looked upon as the bulwark of a religious order, and wished that his followers should love it as a mother. This made him call the Society the Family of Poverty, and declare, that to retain therein not only any part of one's own property, but any thing superfluous or of value, seemed in his eyes a kind of profanation: they found great difficulty in making him accept of two pictures of S. Thomas of Aquin, and S. Catherine, for whom he had a particular devotion. He never had a reliquary, and would only use such beads as were made of the most ordinary wood. He considered himself as a poor man, who ought to be persuaded that people would only give him the worst, and who never ought to grumble at what he received: he never was heard to say that his clothes were either too big or too little; they were always to his liking, except when they were too good; so he never would receive any thing till it had been worn by others. One day they gave him a book very prettily bound; but his continual entreaties soon procured him another instead. When Aloysius was on a journey, an innkeeper once made a difficulty of letting him have a bed, telling him, that he expected some persons of quality. Aloysius's companion asked the man, to whom he thought he was speaking? but the humble religious gently checked his hastiness: "Why," says he, "brother, are you so hard upon him? you have no reason. We are poor men; he treats us as such, and we ought not

to complain." He was glad to accompany those who, according to the custom of the society, go to beg alms before their profession. One day he found such satisfaction herein, that he openly testified it as he went along the streets, often repeating these words: "this was the way Jesus Christ begged from door to door." His father had assigned him an annual pension when he renounced the marquisate in favour of his brother, which failing by some accident, the saint received the news with thanks to God, for having relieved him of a burden, by which he had hitherto some little connection with the world. The spirit of evangelical poverty not only abolished the desire of possessing, but even forbade him the pleasure of giving a sacrifice to which a heart like his could not but be sensible; nature had filled it with gratitude and generosity; but he was persuaded, that it did not become a poor man to be liberal. This made him refuse all those little things which a religious may make a present of to a friend, without transgressing the bounds of poverty. What were absolute necessities he would receive from no one but superiors, looking upon them as the ministers of Providence, and channels through which alone we are to receive whatever it bestows upon us.

This made him obey them punctually in every thing, and look upon their will and judgment as the rule of his own. He never felt even those first natural motions, of which we are not the masters; those passing inclinations to do otherwise than we are desired, except when, to relieve his decaying constitution, they ordered him to break off his exercises of devotion. He never asked any reason why any thing was commanded: and said, tha

since the orders of superiors were the declaration of the divine will, neither superiors ought to give, nor inferiors to require, any other reason, than that such was the will of God. He added likewise, that there was great reason to apprehend that those superiors, who rendered their orders easy by adducing many reasons from human prudence, did considerable prejudice to the spiritual profit and perfection of their religious. "Would to God," he would say, "that those who govern us would never give any other reason why they command us such and such things, than that the service of God, and his greater glory require we should do as we are bid." These principles rendered his obedience to all superiors uniform and constant, nor was his profound respect diminished by whatever imperfections he discovered in them. He said, that if herein we considered only the person of man, it would be weak and low-spirited to obey them, few being able to claim any natural right to command us. "Thus," continued he, "it is not only more meritorious but more agreeable to obey out of a motive purely supernatural, than to admit any of those natural and worldly considerations, which always cast a blemish upon this virtue, and even destroy the very essence of it, when proper qualifications are wanting in a superior, since in that case every motive to obedience must fail." His devotion never prevailed upon him to do one thing while obedience enjoined another. One day, while he was engaged in some corporal exercise, he reflected that he had not complied with his daily custom of reading something in St. Bernard: but as he was just going to leave what he was then about; "What," said he to himself "would you learn, were you to go to read St. Ber

nard, but obedience? Proceed, therefore, as if you had read him already, and obey."

Never was there a more complete master of his passions than Aloysius: he looked upon them as dangerous guides in the way of life. In the practice of virtue he never let himself be carried away by certain fits of fervour, common enough to beginners, especially if they be young. He always mistrusted the natural heat of temper, which often blends itself with that of zeal, and reckoned it the most secure part to regulate his conduct according to the light of reason. Yet never had any one less reason than he to mistrust the motions of his heart, for they were brought under so severe a subjection, that many have deposed upon oath, that after most diligent observations, they could never discover in Aloysius any of those sudden sallies of anger or impatience which sometimes escape the most perfect, and which can scarcely be foreseen. After so complete a victory over his passions, we may easily imagine how he attained to such purity of conscience, that sometimes the utmost efforts of diligence and severity in examining himself, could not discover any thing in his conduct which he could reckon a venial sin. This circumstance cast him one day into such anxiety, that he immediately repaired to his master of novices, telling him, with feelings of great affliction, he feared very much this was only the effect of the little knowledge he had of himself; that he could find nothing to lay to his charge, because God had cast an obscurity over his conscience, and had almost reduced him to spiritual blindness—a state so prejudicial and dangerous to a tepid soul.

From this source also flowed that peace of heart,

by which he remained calm and unmoved amidst the accidents, vicissitudes, and occupations of life. Every desire, not only indifferent in itself, but even good and pious, became forbidden in his eyes the very moment he saw it capable of disturbing the serenity of his mind. The first thing he did upon his entrance into religion, was to forbid himself to think on what he had left in the world: so that being asked whether he did not feel some uneasiness at the remembrance of those things; he answered, that he never thought of them but when he recommended his friends in general to God, being by the divine grace so entirely master of his own thoughts, that they were never settled upon any thing but what he pleased. But this composure never appeared more conspicuous than in adversity. The death of his father, which happened soon after his entrance into the noviceship, seemed to affect him no more than that of an ordinary person. Nevertheless it was well known, and he himself had declared, that nothing in the world was dearer to him. He began the letter which he wrote to his mother upon this occasion, with these words: "Thanks be to God that nothing for the future shall hinder me from saying, 'Our Father, who art in heaven.'" He owned, indeed, that his father's death, if considered merely without any regard to other circumstance, would naturally have been a great affliction; but when he reflected that it was the will of God he should die then, he could be sorry for it no longer. He even discovered in this occurrence, reasons to admire the conduct of Providence, both with regard to his father and himself: with regard to himself, because had it happened sooner, it might have at least delayed, perhaps prevented, his

admission into the novitiate; and with regard to his father, because the part he took in his son's holy retirement contributed not a little to dispose him for a happy death. In fact, the marquis sometimes, in the intensity of his contrition, feeling the tears trickle down his cheeks, would cry out, "Ah! I know well enough whence these tears flow: these are the effects of the prayers of my Aloysius."

The holy young man always thought that this peace and tranquillity of heart was a requisite disposition for enjoying a communication with God in prayer. He said, that as water, while troubled or in agitation, can never reflect the face of those who look into it, so a soul ruffled with passions or troubled with disquiet, is in a very improper disposition to receive the impressions of the divine Spirit. For this reason he prepared himself before prayer with the greatest diligence, and never entered upon that holy exercise but with the most profound recollection. During the course of it, distractions never troubled him; and he even acknowledged, in laying open the state of his conscience to his confessor, according to the rule of the Society, that in six months he had never been distracted for the space of one single 'Ave Maria.' God himself, during that holy time, took up all his attention in a most ineffable manner, and poured into his innocent soul such abundance of light and interior joy, that when he rose from prayer, his strength was exhausted, and he was unable to stand upon his feet. His contemplation was accompanied with a continual gift of tears, so that his superiors, fearing lest they might increase his headache and weaken his eyes, suggested all the means they could think of to stop them; but all their endeavours were vain. To stop

his tears, Aloysius must have stopped the breath of that Holy Spirit which called forth those salutary waters, and this would have been a task above his strength. His superiors, perceiving that his weak and emaciated body must in a short time fall a victim to his uninterrupted application to God, forbade him, for a time, the use of mental prayer, and declared to him, that the more he should abstain from it, the more perfectly he would comply with what obedience demanded of him. He did what he could to obey, and even refused the offer which one of the fathers made him, to intercede with the General in his favour, for leave to spend in mental prayer the hour daily allotted by the Society for that end; fearing lest the inclination he felt for this leave might at last produce uneasiness, and be not quite consistent with the spirit of perfect obedience. But notwithstanding his endeavours to lay aside, as it were, all thoughts of God, in spite of them God rendered himself continually present to his mind, so that sometimes in a kind of complaint he would cry out: "I know not what to do; I am forbidden to think of God, lest my headache be increased by that application; and the endeavours I use to banish the thought of him hurt me more than the very application would. To think of God is now grown habitual to me; instead of being a fatigue, it is a relaxation, it is an amusement: nevertheless, I will try to obey to the best of my power."

When the orders of his superiors had made him break off his continual prayer, he endeavoured to make amends, by short and frequent visits to the Blessed Sacrament, whither he was no sooner come, but he returned immediately, fearing, if I may use the expression, lest the Spirit of God should rush in

upon him. But he fled in vain ; for God seemed as resolute to pursue him, as he was disposed to fly : insomuch that sometimes out of obedience endeavouring to extricate himself from those delights in which he was involved, he would cry out, “ Retire from me, O Lord, retire from me ! ”

Sometimes, while employed in corporal exercises by his superiors, in order to call off his attention, the Holy Ghost would infuse into his breast so violent a flame of divine love, that his whole face would glow with fire, and his heart seem to make extraordinary efforts to start from its place. This continual thought of the presence of God almost deprived him of the use of his senses, scarcely leaving him sufficiently master of himself to perform the common functions of life ; till at last the superiors finding their plan of restoring his health of body, by restraining him from meditation, prove ineffectual, abandoned him to that Holy Spirit which inspired him, and gave him leave to apply himself again to prayer. Aloysius looked upon this exercise as the very life of a religious man ; and declared it his opinion, that no one but a man of prayer could be master of himself, subdue his passions, or ever attain to perfection.

Whatever defects were observed in religious persons, he attributed to their neglect of this holy exercise ; and not only made it his principal business himself, but endeavoured to inculcate the same maxim to others. His union with God was so intimate, that whenever necessity obliged him to interrupt it, his heart suffered violence and pain, like that which we feel, when a limb is out of joint. When his prayer was finished, he scarcely knew where he was, and his senses were so absorbed, that he recovered them but with difficulty. His brother Rudolphus having

one day some business of importance to communicate to him, and coming just at the time of communion, though the porter told him that the prince, his brother, was in haste, he remained two whole hours in prayer, before he went to see him. There was something remarkable in his method of prayer; for though he daily prepared himself diligently for this exercise, according to the rules laid down by Saint Ignatius, yet those to whom he laid open the state of his conscience, plainly discovered the operations of the Spirit of God, and very sensible proofs of a most sublime contemplation. One day, Father Achilles Gailliard, a person of great credit, and an eminent divine, after some discourse with him upon this subject, perceived, from what he said, that he had entered very far into that mysterious way of which Saint Dionysius speaks; and that God had revealed to him all the secrets of that mystical theology, in the practice of which is found a perfect union of the contemplative soul with its Creator. At the conclusion of this discourse, when the Father told him that he was surprised he should give into this method of mental prayer, which being a strong attractive to solitude, might at last give him a disgust for those exterior functions of an apostolical life of which the Society makes particular profession; he replied, that were he to perceive any thing of this effect, he would immediately lay this exercise aside, as incompatible with a duty essential to his profession.

After all this we cannot wonder that the great Cardinal Bellarmin, when spiritual father in the Roman College, in giving the points of meditation to the young religious, would so frequently cite the authority of our saint; and, to recommend any par-

ticular rule for the well performing of their mental prayer, would tell them, "I have learnt that from our Aloysius." He was particularly devout to the Blessed Sacrament, in the participation whereof God communicated himself to him after a very extraordinary manner. One part of the week was spent in a preparation to receive it, and the remainder in thanksgiving for what he had received: so that in his regard we may truly say, one communion was a preparation for the next. The day before he received the sacrament, he talked of nothing but of that holy mystery; but he spoke in a manner so calculated to excite awe and respect, that even priests said that they experienced great devotion in saying mass, after having been in his company, and several sought it for no other reason but to hear him discourse upon that subject. I shall add nothing to what I have already said concerning his devotion to the Blessed Virgin. It began while he was yet in the world, and grew perfect in religion, and the more so, because he acknowledged himself indebted to her for his vocation. He likewise had a particular regard for the holy angels. Father Vincentius Brune, in the second part of his meditations, has transcribed one drawn up by our Saint, in their honour, and the learned Andrew Victoretus has also cited it in his works.

St. Aloysius Gonzaga was too great a master in the science of the saints, not to know that the spirit of prayer must be supported by the spirit of mortification. Mortification, unless sweetened by prayer, would be a task too heavy for our weakness, and the delights of prayer without mortification are above the condition of our humanity. It could not be expected that Aloysius, in religion, should carry his

fervour to greater lengths than he had done while in the world: it was even foreseen that obedience would restrain him from some excesses into which he had fallen before. We may rather wonder that his superiors permitted him to proceed so far as they did; which, perhaps, may be ascribed to that particular conduct of Divine Providence, which thought proper to lead him to perfection by the way of penance and austerities. He practised some of every kind, and with a rigour which astonished those who were aware of them. Some represented to him, that he must certainly be troublesome to his superiors by continually teasing them for leave in these matters: he replied, that being inspired to practise these austerities, and on the other hand incapable, through want of health, to satisfy his good desires, he thought he could not do better than obey the inspiration of God by asking leave for what he desired, and at the same time submit himself to the discretion of superiors by doing no more than they thought proper; that he often asked leave for what he knew very well would be denied him; but that he reaped a double fruit from thus addressing himself to superiors—first, in offering his good desires to God, and, secondly, in obeying the judgment of others. Some told him that it seemed strange he should pay so little deference to the opinion of many prudent men, who all unanimously advised him to consider his weakness and spare his health; Aloysius reasoned upon this matter in the following manner:—“I take notice,” said he, “that those who give me this advice are of two sorts. Some do not follow it themselves, and these are perfect religious men, in whose conduct nothing can be found but what I should do well to imitate. If sometimes I am apt

to believe what they say out of charity towards me, I am always more inclined to follow what they practise so much to their own advantage. Others indeed observe themselves, what they prescribe for me : but when I cast an eye upon their behaviour, the maxims of the latter have much less force with me than the example of the former." He said that he resembled a crooked iron, and had come to religion in order to be hammered into shape. When put in mind that perfection consisted in a heart truly virtuous—not in the practice of corporal austerities, he answered in the words of the Gospel, " We must fulfil the former, without omitting the latter." He confirmed what he said by the example of all the saints, especially of the first fathers of the Society, and of its holy founder in particular, who enjoined to his religious no determinate austerities, because, hoping they would be all persons of eminent sanctity, he imagined they would rather stand in need of a superior to restrain, than of a rule to excite, their fervour. He used to say that youth was the time to do penance, old age being often, through weakness, incapable of supporting it. He thought those blessed who were in an occasion of enduring any thing for the sake of God ; and declared that Heaven could never give a more sensible proof of mercy towards a soul, than by loading it with tribulations, which it had never deserved. Every thing, in fine, that could be called a cross, had charms in his eyes, and the most ardent of his desires was that of suffering for God. To this spirit of mortification he joined so severe a guard over his senses, that he seemed to have lost the use of them. His ears were shut to news of every kind, and to whatever seemed indifferent to his progress in virtue. One might

easily perceive he took no satisfaction in hearing such things, nor was he at a loss how to turn off the discourse, whenever the respect due to those in company did not require he should be silent. He often went to the same place without observing how it was built, situated, or what was to be seen. One day, the novices had been sent to a different country-house from their ordinary one, and upon his return they asked him, whether he liked it better than that he formerly used to go to ; but were much surprised to hear him inquire, whether it was not the same they had always been at, though the difference was very striking. His taste seemed entirely lost, so little notice did he take of what he ate, unless when one thing appeared worse than another. He chose rather to be silent than to speak, and in speaking almost carried his caution to scrupulosity.

Yet he was not scrupulous, though of a conscience extremely delicate. His confessors have declared, that in his confessions he was neither perplexed nor anxious. The faults he fell into disturbed not the peace of his mind ; he immediately acknowledged himself to be in the wrong, and was easy as before. They served indeed to humble him, but never weakened his resolution. He said, the excessive anxiety people sometimes feel on these occasions, was a proof they had never entered into the knowledge of themselves. "A man," said he, "that knows himself, cannot be ignorant that his heart is a soil which produces weeds in plenty."

Though St. Aloysius Gonzaga lived not to exercise his zeal for the salvation of his neighbour, he nevertheless discovered a very ardent one upon every occasion that presented itself ; and the success with which God favoured him seemed to pre-

size that one day it would produce plentiful fruit. His words were efficacious wherever he applied them, whether to the conversion of a sinner, to the comfort of the afflicted, or the exhortation of his brethren to perfection. One day, in catechizing, which, according to the custom of Rome, he often did in the open streets and market-places, he made such impressions upon an obdurate sinner, who had passed six years without once going to confession, that he persuaded him to retire to the church, where he procured a confessor. Another day he met a woman who, inquiring after one of the fathers, an acquaintance of hers, cried out, "Lord, into what a condition has that unfortunate man thrown himself!" Aloysius immediately laid hold of the occasion to admonish her of what she had said, telling her at the same time, that the religious she asked after was much happier than herself, who, amidst the vain pleasures of this world, ran a continual risk of her eternal salvation: words which so struck this woman, that she was converted upon the spot, and ever after led a holy life. One of the religious, being discouraged and afflicted at his little progress in virtue, addressed him; Aloysius comforted him with these words of the Psalmist: "'Thy eyes, O Lord, have beheld my imperfections, and they shall all be marked down in thy book.'" He added, at the same time, that if we had reason to humble ourselves at the sight of our faults, we might likewise find comfort in the consideration, that God, notwithstanding our imperfections, had written our names in the book of life, and that he sometimes leaves us to our weakness for our greater good, and in order to preserve our humility.

He had not been a year in the noviceship, when

the General thought proper to remove him, it hopes that a change of air might produce some improvement in his health, which was daily declining. His headache, in particular, received no ease from whatever remedy was applied. Father John Baptist Piscator, his master of novices, whose sanctity was testified even by the working of miracles, being about this time sent to Naples for his health, the superiors judging that change of air might be useful to Aloysius, he had the pleasure of his company on the journey. As soon as the father knew he was to go, he asked Aloysius of his own accord, whether he was willing to go along with him? The Holy Novice, who had a particular esteem for his Master of Novices, immediately replied—with all his heart; but the moment after he had a scruple of what he had said, fearing it might have contributed to his removal. “You ought,” said he, in reproaching himself for his fault, “to have answered, that you were in the hands of superiors, without showing any repugnance or inclination to what was proposed.” Ever after this accident, he was extremely cautious in this particular, and recommended it to others as an infallible means of being sure that we always perform the will of God.

He arrived at Naples about the beginning of November, which being the time when schools are opened, it was thought proper to make him finish his course of philosophy, which he had not been able to do while in the world. His application to study had not now the effect it formerly had in Spain: it neither rendered his fervour more remiss, nor, what is too often the case, dried up the spirit of devotion. Nor did he apply himself to it with that anxious eagerness which flows from an inordi

nate thirst of knowledge, or vainglorious desire of acquiring a reputation for learning—passions which can produce nothing but pride of heart and dissipation of spirit: more especially in a Jesuit, who ought to study only in order to render himself more capable of serving God, and in whom it would be a deplorable blindness to neglect the service of God, in order to devote himself more entirely to his studies.

He gave great edification to the college of Naples, by the care he took to keep himself retired and concealed, which alone was sufficient to draw the eyes of every one upon him. About this time Scipio Gonzaga was made cardinal. It was but natural for Aloysius to feel some joy at this promotion of a prelate, related to him by birth, and remarkable for the particular affection which he bore him. Yet he never discovered the least sign of it; and as if he imagined by that to conceal from others the additional honour which accrued to his family, he took no notice of the event.

His spirit of mortification during his stay in this college, appeared more conspicuous, because being under the direction of a superior, remarkable for his austerity of life, he obtained leave to perform many things in this way, which never would have been allowed him at Rome. But nothing attracted the admiration of others more, than his patience in taking no notice of certain oversights which were committed in his regard, no doubt by a particular disposition of Providence, who was willing to put his servant to this trial, for it was never the intention of those who by their negligence contributed to it; and it was also remarked, that this want of care and consideration for him did not flow from their

natural character. His superior, very sensible of the great difficulty he had of sleeping at night, ordered him to lie in bed beyond the ordinary time: yet the room assigned him was most exposed to noise, and of all others the least convenient for enjoying that ease which he was willing to procure him. The minister of the college of Naples was at that time a man very charitable to the sickly, and very easy in releasing them from certain tasks commonly assigned to the students: Aloysius, nevertheless, was generally one of those who escaped his charity. An infirmarian, otherwise very diligent in his office, let him sleep one night in a bed without sheets, when dangerously ill of a fever and erysipelas. On all these occasions, the love of the cross stifled in Aloysius those motions of impatience which would naturally arise, and from a nicety of virtue, extraordinary even among holy people, forbade him either to pity himself, or suffer himself to be pitied by others.

He stayed only six months at Naples, for the General being informed that his headache, far from decreasing, grew daily worse, called him back to Rome, where, having finished his course of philosophy, he was ordered to prepare for a public defence of it. While he was preparing for this performance, a thought came into his head that to render himself despicable in the eyes of man by answering ill, and affecting ignorance, might be an act of humility agreeable in the sight of God. But not willing to rely upon his own judgment in the determination of so extraordinary a point, he communicated his design to his professor, whom he knew to be a sure guide in the science of saints, as well as an eminent master in philosophy. He acquiesced

at last in his dissuasions to the contrary : but the same desire returned upon him again when he was engaged in the dispute, and he stood in need of all his docility to prevail upon himself to follow the counsel of his master. His obedience in this matter, though highly against his will, proved much to his honour. For the solidity of his answers, and the manner wherewith they were delivered, drew upon him the applause of all the Roman college, and of several cardinals who were present at the performance. He gave upon this occasion a signal proof how much he hated to be praised. One of the disputants began his argument by a compliment upon his birth, and the splendour of his family. Aloysius was confounded at what he said, to a degree which put the audience in pain. It seemed to have raised in him a kind of embarrassment, which lasted during the whole time the doctor disputed.

Immediately after the conclusion of his philosophy, he entered upon his course of divinity, at the beginning of which he made his vows, and received the tonsure and minor orders. He considered these new engagements to the service of God as new graces, which demanded from him a new correspondence and new fidelity.

God seemed to have raised up Saint Aloysius, that the students of the Society might behold in him a perfect model of every virtue proper to their state. A diligent application to his studies was thought by him one of the most essential, learning being a necessary qualification for that apostolical life, of which the Society makes a particular profession. As he proposed no other end in his studies but that ordained by our institute, so he

followed therein no other method but that prescribed by our rules ; and thus what often serves others for a pretext to tepidity, in him only proved an incentive to regularity. His masters, among whom was the celebrated Vasquez, agreed, that he had a fine genius for the sciences ; one of them declared that while he was studying a very difficult point, and preparing to answer the objections which might be brought against his system, his greatest apprehension arose from the penetration of Gonzaga. While he resided at Milan, before his admission into the society, he gave a specimen of a very extraordinary memory. He daily heard a lecture on mathematics, which, at his return, he used to dictate to a scribe. Father Cepari, into whose hands these papers afterwards fell, upon comparing them with the writings of the professor, was surprised to find them agree line for line, and almost word for word. Some papers which he left behind, show that he had not neglected the study of the Scripture, Holy Fathers, and masters of a spiritual life. One may perhaps wonder how it was that, although continually engaged, either in prayer, or works of charity, he could still find considerable time for his studies. He suffered no part of his leisure to be unoccupied, or the least interval of it to be lost ; but what other people give to a hundred idle amusements, he consecrated either to works of piety, or to the acquisition of knowledge. But in the course of his studies, he put less confidence either in his application or his talents, than in the assistance of Heaven, which he implored by a short prayer upon his knees before he began. He did not run over a variety of different authors, but gave his whole mind attentively to peruse, and fully to

understand the dictates of his professor. If any objection presented itself, which he was not able to refute, it was his custom to note it down, and to propose it to his master, after the difficulties of all his fellow-students had been solved, during that part of the public lesson which was allotted for this purpose: but if his objections were numerous, he used to collect them together, and wait upon his professor in private, at the time which he judged would be most convenient to him. In proposing his doubts, he always made use of the Latin language, and always, through respect, held his cap in his hand till he was compelled to cover himself. As soon as all his difficulties were removed, he immediately returned to his chamber to resume his studies. Never was he known to take, or to read any book, but with the permission and by the advice of his superiors. The following instance, amongst others, will abundantly show how exact he was in this practice. One day he called upon his professor for the explanation of a passage concerning predestination. His professor having satisfied him on this head, threw open a volume of St. Augustin's works, and pointing to the last page but one, bade the saint read what the holy doctor had written there on the same subject. He studied with attention the whole page that had been pointed out to him, but did not presume to turn over the leaf, in order to read ten lines which were in the ensuing page, and which finished the book; because, he had only been desired to read the foregoing page. Such a timidity may, perhaps, excite pity in the worldly wise; but it presents to the studious client of St. Aloysius, a striking example how to mortify even a laudable desire of know

ledge, by obedience and self-denial. Far from seeking excuses to exempt himself from those defences and disputations which are usual in the higher studies, he was always ready to supply the place of any one who had not leisure to prepare himself for them. He argued with equal spirit and modesty ; never was he known to make use of any insulting expression ; never was he known to be loud and clamorous, or to interrupt the answers of his opponent ; on the contrary, he patiently allowed him time to deliver his opinion fully ; and as soon as all the difficulties and the obscurity of the point in question were cleared away, he immediately assented, with a certain amiable candour, and ceased to argue any more. As well before the signal was given to repair to the public school, as on returning from it, both morning and evening, he never failed daily to visit the church, in order to adore the most Blessed Eucharist. In going to the school and in returning from it, there appeared in his whole person such heavenly modesty and composure, that even the extern-students, who used to stop in the adjoining galleries to gaze upon the holy youth, were inflamed with the love of virtue. Amongst the rest there was a certain clergyman, who, though he had completed his course of theology, yet continued to frequent the school, attracted by the charming modesty of Aloysius, on whom he never ceased to look during the whole time. To Saint Aloysius, then, we may apply that saying of St. Ambrose, on the 118th Psalm. "It is an advantageous thing," says the holy doctor, "to see a just man ; for the sight of him is to most men a warning to correct their conduct ; and to the more per-

fect it is a subject of joy.” So careful also of silence was St. Aloysius on these occasions, that he never was observed to speak one word either with any one of his own companions, or of the externs, whether in repairing to the school, or in returning from it, and much less while the public exercises were going on. His superiors, on account of his continual bad health, forbade him to write himself, and assigned him a secretary to write in his stead. Aloysius obeyed for a time, without reply; but this small exemption from the common labour of the school, was so disagreeable to him, and he was so apprehensive that others might take occasion from thence to seek for the like privileges without necessity, that he at length persuaded his superiors to allow him to write like the rest, which he ever after constantly did, though for want of practice, he was usually obliged to supply afterwards nearly one-half of what had been dictated: but his love for regularity and uniformity made this double labour sweet and easy. He kept no books in his chamber except the Holy Bible, and the theological writings of St. Thomas,—“for these are the only books,” he used to say, “which I constantly use. If I want any others, it will not be too troublesome to go to the common library to read them.” So extreme was the love which this young prince had for poverty! But being afterwards informed that one of his companions was seeking in vain for the works of St. Thomas, Aloysius hastened to the rector, and earnestly begged leave to make over to that companion the copy which he used; to obtain which favour he brought such plausible arguments, that the rector at length consented, and the saint enjoyed the double

pleasure of finding himself more indigent than he was before, and of having gratified one of his brethren.

It is hard to express what fervour was excited among the students in the Roman College by his example, and how much his zeal and industry contributed to that end. He gathered together a few of his companions, whom he had observed more eager in the pursuit of virtue than the rest, and told them that he earnestly wished, for his own improvement, that they would allow him, now and then, to converse with them on pious subjects during the hours allotted for innocent recreation. Having obtained their consent, he, in the mean while, dedicated half an hour daily to the reading of some pious book, or the life of some saint, lest he should be at a loss for matter to speak upon. Thus prepared, he began to put his design into execution: first, by conversing with those who had agreed to it; but he soon extended it to others. If he found himself in a circle of his inferiors, he was always the first to enter upon some pious discourse; and what he said, he said with so much feeling, that the whole company were soon incited by the pleasure which they experienced in hearing him to join in the conversation; but, if he happened to be with priests, or his superiors, he then used to propose to them some question regarding piety, in order to learn from them. When he was with his equals, if they were his chosen band, he had no difficulty in bringing them to a conversation on holy things; if they were not, he still hesitated not to throw out some pious remark; and, as his companions were all religious men, they seldom proved unwilling to second his zealous views. Such was

the amiable ingenuity of Aloysius to turn their conversation to good. But he did not long stand in need of it; for all were so charmed with his discourse on these occasions, that as soon as ever they saw him coming towards them, they used, of their own accord, to break off any discourse upon indifferent subjects, and enter upon one that tended to piety. Still Aloysius was not content with these exertions; he well knew how soon those new and lively impressions which dilate the heart of a youth when first he enters into religion, are accustomed to die away; and, therefore, as soon as ever any novice came to the Roman college, he used either to undertake the care of him in person, or despatch some trusty friend for that charitable purpose. His chief endeavour was to preserve in his new companion that spirit of fervour and devotion which he had imbibed during his noviceship. For this purpose he used immediately to insinuate himself, by every innocent service and kind attention, into his friendship; he next confidently assured him, "that if he only chose to act as became him, and endeavour to advance in the paths of virtue, he could promise him, that he would find abundance of virtuous companions eager to assist him in so noble an undertaking, and that, until he should acquire himself a knowledge of each one, he would point out to him five or six of those who outstript their brethren in heavenly things." After this, on the other hand, he used to advise those whom he had mentioned, to associate with their new brother; and, indeed, his charity was always crowned with success. In like manner, if the zealous servant of God observed in any one a decay of that spirit which is the soul of a religious life, he used for

several days to dedicate all his leisure time to his advancement, until he saw him restored to the perfection from which he had fallen. Then he took an occasion to remark to him, that it was more perfect to keep company with all indiscriminately; that he would advise him to associate much with those among his companions whose conduct was most exemplary; and, having prepared the latter to meet the eager wishes of a brother, fresh renewed in fervour, he used to attach himself to some one else. It is evident from the fruits which these indefatigable endeavours produced during the space of a few weeks, that they had God for their author. The testimony of Father Virgil Cepari, who at that time was very intimate with St. Aloysius, as he held a principal office in the college, and who, after his death, wrote his life in Latin, is very clear. "I remember," says Ceparius, "that, when there were in the college above two hundred students, I have often gazed upon them on a summer's day, during those hours which were allotted them to unbend their minds from the fatigue of application, as they were walking up and down in the garden, or the galleries, two and two together, or three or four, as chance would have it, and as I was well acquainted with the interior of each one of them, I can safely pronounce that there was not one band, of whose conversation God was not the subject. Many acknowledged that they reaped more profit from these saintly meetings, than from prayer itself; for as each one with the most engaging candour related the illustrations and consolations he enjoyed during prayer, the flames of divine love which had been enkindled in the heart of the most devout, communicated their sweet influence to the hearts of all his

hearers. At the same time there appeared in every one so much charity and cheerfulness; that if, by chance, no pious subject had been started, during the hours for recreation, each one returned to his studies with dejected looks and a sorrowful heart. Pious discourse also became their delight whenever they walked in the country; and at the country-house, on those days when there was a vacation from school, they used to retire in small companies of two or three or four together, to enjoy what they thought the most agreeable of all entertainments, and this was pious discourse. Moreover, during the longer holydays, which the students in the Roman college used to spend in part at Tivoli, to recruit their strength and relax their minds, their chief amusement again was pious conversation. With the permission of their superiors, they came provided with spiritual books, each according to his inclination, or the progress he had made in a spiritual life, and taking advantage of the coolness of the morning, and the refreshing breezes of the evening, they used to scatter themselves in small clusters along the neighbouring hills; or meeting by chance in some shady grove, in greater numbers, they would sit down to regale themselves with pious conversation, with such cheerfulness, such eagerness, and such devotion, that they seemed like choirs of blessed spirits." Aloysius, on these occasions, was the life and soul of the rest. To that air of sanctity which his whole person inspired, and which claimed universal respect, was joined a certain easy and pleasing good nature, which rendered him amiable to all. His conversation was entertaining and sprightly; he told a story in an agreeable manner, and often surprised and en-

livened his companions with sudden and lively strokes of wit. They, consequently, always placed him before their eyes, and bore him in their hearts; listened to him with eagerness, and studiously sought his company, and thus formed themselves for the great and noble undertakings in which many of them afterwards wrought such wonders, by the conversion of infidels and sinners, and by leading so many souls to perfection. Nor did the charity of Aloysius, who in the world was so liberal towards the poor, forget them in religion; while he lived in the Roman college, he was appointed to distribute among them after meals, what was laid aside for that purpose. He received this little employment very willingly, and acquitted himself of it with a tenderness and affection, which evidently showed he thought himself doing an act of charity for Jesus Christ's person, in that of his suffering members. One day he asked leave to go and pay a visit, in an old ragged cassock, with a wallet upon his shoulder, to John de Medicis, whom the duke of Tuscany had sent to transact an important affair with Gregory IV. He found great difficulty in obtaining leave, but at last succeeded. When he was just going out, meeting some one at the gate, who seemed surprised to see him in that equipage, he told him that he had leave from the provincial for what he did: "and I have two reasons," added he, "for doing so; first, I am very certain that I shall receive a considerable alms from the ambassador, for the help of so many poor wretches who are lying in every street in town; and the second reason is still more strong, and that which chiefly determines me to appear before him in the figure I am in at present."

He explained himself no farther at that time, but

every one concluded his principal design was to stir up that high sense of religion in which he had formerly left John de Medicis, with whom he was particularly acquainted at the court of Florence, and to move him by his words and example to a contempt of the vanities of this world. The visit succeeded according to his wishes. John de Medicis gave him a considerable sum for the benefit of the poor; and, struck with the great example which he saw before his eyes, was more sensible than ever that poverty and the humiliation of the cross are preferable to all this world calls great. The pomp that environed him in that moment appeared all empty vanity, and he expressed these sentiments to his attendants in the most moving and tender manner.

Thus lived in the Roman college, this angel clothed in mortal flesh, when Providence thought proper to assign him a different sphere in which he might display his zeal. Horace Gonzaga of Solfarin, dying without issue, Rodolphus, Marquis of Chatillion, the next heir, resolved to enter upon the estate, but was prevented by Vincent, Duke of Mantua, to whom Horace had bequeathed it. The contested estate being an imperial fief, Rodolphus applied to the emperor, desiring that the will might be declared void; and he obtained his request: for the marchioness, his mother, going in person to the emperor, then at Prague, spoke so powerfully in behalf of the Chatillion family, that she obtained a sentence in its favour. This did not put an end to the contest, but increased the animosity. The duke still remained in possession of Solfarin, and the marquis was as obstinate in pursuing his pretensions. Many persons of authority endeavoured to

reconcile their differences: the Archduke Ferdinand, brother to the emperor, undertook the business, but all to no purpose. The animosity daily increased, and the people began to dread the consequences, when the Duchess of Mantua and the Marchioness of Chatillion, the mothers of the two princes, agreed to have recourse to Aloysius, for whom the duke had a particular affection, and to whom Rodolphus lay under obligations.

This resolution being taken, they wrote to Aloysius, then at Rome, desiring him to undertake the cause for the good of the family, which was divided, and might be ruined by this occurrence. Aloysius was alarmed at the proposal. He had learned from St. Paul, that whoever is engaged in the service of God, must not trouble himself with the business of this world; and accordingly answered the princesses, that he imagined it was not proper he should meddle with the affair. But upon more mature consideration, when he reflected that the regard we owe to charity ought to go before all other duties—that it might suffer by his refusing to contribute to the re-establishment of peace and concord in his family, he applied to his confessor, Father Bellarmin, for counsel. That great man, after having implored the light of God, answered, that he ought to obey the call of charity, and that the glory of God required that he should go.

The General, to whom the duchess had applied, sent him orders to depart. Aloysius was at Tivoli with the other students of the Roman college, when Bellarmin brought these orders from Rome. He returned immediately, took leave of the General and the cardinals his relations, and set forward upon his journey.

He began it on the fourteenth of December, 1589, in the company of F. Bernardin de Medicis, his intimate friend, who went to expound Holy Scripture at Milan; and of a lay brother, whom he was ordered to obey in every thing which concerned his health. He was now grown so weak by the austerity of his life, that in taking leave of Cardinal de la Rovere, he fainted away. He was everywhere received as an angel sent down from heaven. The Duchess of Mantua beheld him with admiration; and the marchioness his mother, struck with an awful idea of his sanctity, received him on her knees. Their conversation resembled that of the ancient fathers of the desert, who only met together to pray: for the companion of Aloysius, who had withdrawn not to be a restraint upon their conversation, found them at his return both praying upon their knees.

He stayed at Chatillion till he was thoroughly acquainted with the state of the quarrel and pretensions of the two princes, between whom he was to act the mediator. During all this time he showed himself perfectly dead to every thing of this world; he constantly refused to receive any thing from his family: his clothes were sent him from the Jesuits of Brescia, and he desired they might not be new ones. His companion, with much difficulty, prevailed upon him to accept of a waistcoat, with some linen prepared for him by the marchioness, which he would not receive till told it was given him as an alms. If his superiors had not prevented him, during his stay at Chatillion, he would have lodged with the archpriest.

The ceremonies usual in the service of a prince, and in the observance of which the Italians are re-

markably scrupulous, gave him great uneasiness. Whenever he appeared in the town he had a chariot to attend him, but he never made use of it, though it followed him wherever he went. He would sometimes say to his companion, "Lord, how happy are we at home! how agreeable are our temperate meals in comparison of these splendid banquets we behold here!" When on a visit to his uncle, Alphonsus Gonzaga, at his seat in the neighbourhood, he was conducted at night into a magnificent apartment. When the company was retired, he cried out to his companion, "The Lord preserve us! Whither have our sins brought us to-day! How much better should we be at home in our chambers and poor beds, than amidst this grandeur!"

The precaution of his superiors in ordering him to obey his companion in whatever concerned his health, was very necessary, for he never reflected on that point unless admonished. He showed everywhere the same sedateness, mortification, and attention to God. Whenever he went to church, there was a great concourse to see him, and all that saw admired him. The first time he appeared, the crowd was so great, that he was tempted to mount the pulpit and make them an exhortation; but his prudence told him that as he came there only to regulate the affairs of his family, he ought to give the first proof of his zeal in the prosecution of that business.

As soon as he had a competent knowledge of the interest and pretensions of the marquis, he passed to Mantua, in order to learn those of the duke. We may justly say that God made him find favour in the eyes of this prince. For notwithstanding all the evil impressions they had made on his mind con-

cerning the marquis, and the resentment he had conceived against him, in half an hour's conversation Aloysius gained such an ascendancy over him, that he prevailed on him to do whatever he pleased. The duke left the decision of all his pretensions entirely to his disposal: and notwithstanding all that could be alleged by some busy politicians, willing either to obstruct the reconciliation, or spin out the business to greater lengths, by having some considerations paid in the articles of accommodation to those princes who had meddled in the business,—he remained positive in his resolution, that Aloysius, in whom he had remarked a very upright intention, supported by a great stock of good sense, should have all the honour of deciding the contest. Aloysius in effect acquitted himself of the commission to the satisfaction of both parties. He then returned to Chatillion for the marquis, whom the duke received very kindly, and made over to him the possession of the Solfarn estate, which has remained in the family ever since. The duke invited the marquis to a banquet, but not being able to prevail upon Aloysius to be one of the company, he told the marquis that he must come to them at least after dinner, and see the comedy; Aloysius, not at a loss for a sprightly reply, told him, his companion would not accept of such an invitation.

The holy youth gave such edification to the fathers of Mantua, by the practice of every kind of virtue, that they looked upon him as a living picture of St. Charles Borromeus, who had been his first director. Though he was so young, Father Prosper Malavolta, who had formerly been admitted into the Society by St. Ignatius himself, and was at that time rector of Mantua, bade him make an exhorta-

tion to his community. His modesty felt great repugnance, and rendered obedience very difficult upon this occasion ; but he made all difficulties yield to the will of his superior ; and taking for his text these words of St. John, "This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you:" he delivered a discourse upon charity, to the great edification of his auditors.

After this happy conclusion of the affair of Mantua, his own family gave Aloysius another business no less intricate to conduct, which required no less abilities than the former. His brother Rodolphus had fallen in love with a young lady of family and fortune, but the inferiority of whose rank rendered a lawful marriage dishonourable. He was sensible that a step of this nature would appear shocking to all his relations, and he in particular dreaded the displeasure of Alphonsus Gonzaga, to whom he was next heir. On the one side, his passion for her was very different from that brutal vice, which, making a victim of the object it pursues, under the name of love, produces all the effects of hatred. He had a real regard for her, and if his own honour was dear to him, the reputation of one whom he loved better than himself, could not but give him some concern. The voice of conscience likewise bore some sway in his breast, and the good education he received with Aloysius had left impressions, which all the fire of youth had not hitherto effaced. In these circumstances, he thought to extricate himself from all difficulties by seizing upon the person whom he loved, and marrying her, with the bishop's leave, in private ; not perceiving that by this conduct he neither satisfied his own conscience, nor secured his reputation, since the marriage, though

lawful, must necessarily give scandal, as long as it remained a secret.

The virtuous marchioness, from whom as well as others Rodolphus had taken care to conceal what he had done, daily bewailed his weakness in the sight of God; and upon the present occasion desired Aloysius to make use of all his interest with his brother, in order to break off farther communication with the young lady. The holy religious was not slow in complying with her desires. Upon the first proposals Rodolphus set the matter in a good light, and endeavoured to baffle him; but being closely pressed, at last was obliged to give his word, that he should be satisfied; and as Aloysius had received orders to finish his divinity at Milan, he told him that in a short time he would see him there and perform what he had promised. Rodolphus was exact in keeping his word; for Aloysius having retired to Milan in the beginning of December, in the year 1589, he paid him a visit in January, and acquainted him with the secret of his marriage. Aloysius was glad to find that he had paid a greater regard to conscience, than he imagined; but at the same time thinking his present conduct not secure, he wrote to Rome, for the advice of the doctors there upon the case, and consulted likewise those of Milan. The wisest among them agreeing that the marquis was obliged to declare his marriage, in order to put a stop to the scandal, he at last prevailed upon him to pass over those considerations which might deter him from following their decision; and undertook himself to prevent the displeasure of his relations, having engaged Rodolphus in the mean time to make a general confession of his whole life.

The veneration which he had acquired, effected speedily and with ease, what a long series of negotiations might perhaps never have been able to bring about. He wrote upon this matter to the Duke of Mantua, and the two Cardinals of Gonzaga: all left the business to his disposal. Alphonsus became as tractable as the rest. As for the pious marchioness, she was always of the same mind, never desiring any thing but what was most conformable to the will of God and the edification of the public.

Aloysius returned to Chatillion for the declaration of the marriage; upon which occasion, he induced several to marry those women, who had till that time only served them as mistresses. He reconciled many enemies; and having been desired by the marchioness to give her a sermon, he did so, on the Saturday before Shrovetide, in the presence of a great concourse of people, and with such success, that, having exhorted his auditors to go the next day to their devotions, the priests and religious of the town were detained all night by the multitude of penitents; and the next morning, Aloysius, the marchioness, Prince Rodolphus, with the new marchioness, and upwards of seven hundred persons, received the blessed sacrament.

Aloysius having no farther business at Chatillion, went to Milan, to pursue his studies in the college of Brete. He was seized with joy upon his entering the house, and unable to conceal it, he cried out, "O what a comfort I feel, to see myself settled in a house of the Society! Methinks, I am like a wretch, who, all shivering with cold, is put into a warm bed. When out of the house, I was quite cold, and now I feel my former warmth returning."

His stay at Milan was but short. He looked upon Rome as his mother, because she had begotten him in Jesus Christ, and there he imbibed the first tincture of a religious spirit. These considerations made him willing to return; but being always upon his guard against such inclinations, he stifled them; till God, who is obsequious to the will of those that fear him, inspired the General to call him thither. This news, which he received from Father Virgil Cepari, who afterwards published his life, gave him such joy, that, fearing self-love might find its interest herein, he desired Father Bernardinus de Medicis to offer up a mass, in order to beg of God that his journey might be broken off, if it were more for his honour and glory that he should remain at Milan. But orders to depart soon after arrived from the General, and dispelled his apprehensions. He immediately wrote letters to many of his friends at Rome, full of expressions of his love for them, and of the pleasure he promised to himself in seeing them again.

Before he left Milan, he received a favour from Heaven too signal to be omitted: this was a certain foreknowledge of his approaching death, communicated to him at prayer by a supernatural illustration, which God infused into his soul; an illustration which he was pleased to accompany with a command to disengage himself more than he had hitherto done, from every thing here below, and exert his utmost efforts to advance in every kind of virtue. He communicated this favour to some of his most intimate friends, and since that time found himself entirely changed into another man, full of an infused virtue, which produced very different effects from that which he had hitherto acquired. He applied

himself to his studies out of obedience, as he had done before; but the pleasure he formerly felt in the acquisition of knowledge now vanished, and all the powers of his soul were engaged and fixed upon God alone. In these dispositions, Aloysius returned to Rome, saying, with allusion to the Scripture-phrase, that he came to bury the dead, and that now his only business was to prepare for eternity. In effect, he seemed to live in a continual ecstasy, and more like an angel than a man.

Though the constant tenor of his life rendered it difficult to perceive the change which this new grace had produced in him, yet several things were remarked, which increased the universal esteem people had already conceived of his sanctity. His love of God was so animated that he could never hear him spoken of without feeling a sensible alteration, which sometimes had very violent effects. One day, as there was read in the refectory a moving passage in a spiritual book, a kind of flame was immediately enkindled in his breast, which, hindering him from eating, made those that sat next him inquire whether he was indisposed: he could answer only by his tears and blushes, from the confusion he felt at having been surprised in this kind of ecstasy. In the mean time, the agitation became so strong, that his breast heaved to a degree which made them fear he might burst a vein. Some, that they might witness these motions of piety, would take a pleasure, when in conversation with him, in turning the discourse upon the love which God bears to man; while others avoided every thing that tended that way, not to throw him into a ferment, which might hurt his health. He was so absorbed in God, that he often did not salute those who passed close

by him, because he did not see them. He found a feeling of delight in reading the soliloquies of Saint Austin the life of Saint Catharine of Genoa, the sermons of Saint Bernard upon the Canticles, and his epistle to the religious *de Monte Dei*; and daily spent an hour in this holy exercise. When in company with those he put a confidence in, he would drop secrets relating to the state of his soul, which filled them at the same time with wonder and veneration.

It is a quality peculiar to this sort of graces and extraordinary impressions, to render the soul free and disengaged. Aloysius Gonzaga, indeed, had always been so, but in these latter times was so more than ever. In a small dark chamber, which he himself had asked for, he had no moveables but a bed, a wooden chair, and a bench, which served him both for a table and a praying-place. He one day gave to his superiors some writings upon divinity, and certain exercises of devotion, desirous, he said, to get rid of them, because he felt some affection towards them, as being his own productions, and possessing now nothing but what was God's, he was unwilling that his conscience should reproach him with having kept those papers.

In fact, heaven was now his only thought, of which, some months before his last sickness, he conceived a very ardent desire. Since that, he talked of death with pleasure, saying it was now high time that it should come; that if he lived longer, he should have much greater reason to fear for his salvation than he then had; because, once entered into holy orders, he was to answer for a due performance of the sacerdotal functions, which he looked upon to be a terrible account; that now

ne had the greater hopes, having nothing but himself to answer for. Such were the sentiments by which God by degrees prepared Aloysius for his last hour, which happened soon after as I shall now relate.

BOOK III.

IN the year 1591, Italy was afflicted with an epidemic distemper, the ordinary consequence of a great famine. The evil raged everywhere, but particularly at Rome, whither the poor had flocked from all sides, and now stood in need of some extraordinary assistance. The Jesuits signalized themselves on this occasion : not content to serve in every hospital in town, they established one at their own expense, where the General himself served the sick with exemplary charity. The students in the Roman college followed the example of their General with extraordinary fervour, but Aloysius distinguished himself far above the rest. Sometimes he went about the town with a wallet upon his shoulder, begging for the poor sick ; at other times he was to be found at their beds, rendering them the meanest services, and those which appear most shocking to that nice disposition so natural to people of his condition. It was observed that he ran more readily to those whose state was the most deplorable, and served them with greater care. His example added an incredible degree of zeal and fervour to the rest. One of them, by name Tiberius Bondi, having been told to moderate himself in his exercise of charity, and take care lest he should catch the distemper, replied, “ Were I to know that I should catch my

death, it would not be possible for me to refrain from acting as I do, as long as I have before my eyes the example of Gonzaga ”

God without doubt gave this young religious such sentiments to prepare him for what was soon to follow : for the contagion getting among these young men, carried him off the first. Aloysius longed for a death so precious in the sight of God, and turning to one of his companions, while Bondi was in his agony, could not help telling him, “ How gladly would I change place with Bondi ! What a favour would God do me, were he to take me in his stead ! ” But it seemed as if they had deprived him of all means of obtaining what he desired, for his superiors forbade him to return to that hospital, where the evil grew every day more fatal and contagious ; till Providence, willing that such a precious victim should be consummated in the exercise of charity, permitted them to yield to his urgent entreaties, for leave to return to the service of the poor. They changed indeed his hospital, and appointed him another, which was destined for those whose illness was not so contagious. But their precaution was to no purpose : he caught the distemper of the place, and it carried him to his grave.

As soon as he found himself unwell, he remembered what had happened to him at Milan, and doubted not but his last sickness, which had been shown him, as near at hand, was that with which he now began to feel himself attacked. The joy he felt upon this occasion caused a scruple ; and he consulted the great Bellarmin, whether there was no harm in thus rejoicing at one’s own death : but his holy director telling him that the desire of death, which springs from an impatience to see God, and

is accompanied with conformity to his will, is praiseworthy, and to be found in the greatest saints ; he gave himself up entirely to that joy and the expectation of eternity.

The violence of the illness soon made it expedient to give him the last sacraments. He received them with an extraordinary piety and presence of mind, answering himself to the prayers of the church, while all that were present melted into tears. In these moments, calling to mind that many had blamed him for those excessive mortifications with which he had macerated his body, telling him, that he had shortened his days, and would have, as St. Bernard had before, a scruple, when he came to die, he called the rector and desired him to assure all present, that he was entirely easy upon that subject : that he was rather sorry for not having practised several other mortifications, for which he might easily have obtained leave : that whatever his superiors had given him leave to do, would never have caused a scruple, no more than what he had hitherto practised, either on this article or any other, since he had never done any thing, but by their direction, and never remembered to have broken a single rule. This spirit of penance and self-hatred accompanied him till his last breath : for after he had received the sacraments, he asked the provincial leave to take a discipline, or receive it from another : which being refused, he begged at least that he might be allowed to die upon the floor : but this request was not granted him any more than the former.

His illness reduced him to such a state, that in many places he was supposed to be dead : the princess his mother, and the Marquis of Chatillion had already performed his obsequies. Soon after

they were informed that a pestilential fever, having reduced him to the last extremity, had remitted upon the seventh day. The marquis, on hearing this news, in a transport of joy, broke to pieces a rich chain which he wore about his neck, and distributed it among his attendants. But his joy was of short duration: the malady changed into a slow fever, which only prolonged his life to increase his sufferings, and crown his former merits.

He held out three months in this condition, spending the precious remains of his life in the continual exercise of every kind of virtue; but his principal care seemed to be to let nothing escape him, that was disagreeable and mortifying either in sickness or in the remedies prescribed him. The lenitives which he was obliged to take, were tolerable only, inasmuch as they were conformable to the strictest poverty, and we may say, that during his sickness, he carried this virtue to the highest pitch of delicacy. As soon as he fell sick, he had been put into a bed, round which were hung curtains of a coarse stuff: he desired they might be taken away, because others had not the like; nor could he be made easy on this matter, but by being told that the bed had not been prepared for him, and that such curtains were consistent with the most rigorous poverty. They had put upon his table a little liquorice and sugar candy; he only used the liquorice; and his infirmarian being desirous to know the reason, he answered, because he thought that became a poor man better than the other. Such things may appear trivial in the sight of man, but the principle from whence they flowed, rendered them great in the sight of God. It was peculiar to Aloysius, that there was nothing so trivial to which his fervour did not make him con-

descend, and nothing so great, his courage did not prompt him to undertake. Having heard that the reigning distempers threatened to turn into a formal plague, he begged leave of the General to make a vow of exposing himself for the service of the infected; and having obtained his consent, made it with a fervour which astonished all that were present.

During the whole course of his sickness, he showed a patience and evenness of temper, which it was impossible to see without being edified. He obeyed, according to his rule, not only his superiors, but physicians and infirmarians. He spoke only of God, and paid attention only to those who spoke of him, saying, that though he was very sensible there was nothing contrary to religious perfection in talking sometimes upon indifferent subjects, if we knew how to direct such conversation to God, yet in the condition he was in at present, he thought every moment too precious not to be spent upon God alone.

The tenderness of his devotion appeared in all his actions: sometimes he put on his gown and dragged himself to his crucifix, and round to other pious pictures, which he called his stations; and when alone would throw himself out of bed and pray upon his knees, till the infirmarian perceived it and forbade him. But among his many prayers, his friends could never prevail upon him to say one for the restoration of his health. His answer upon this point was constantly the same, and in the words of St. Paul: "It is rather to be wished that I should die."

The cardinals de la Rovere and Gonzaga, who often came to visit him, took a particular satisfac

tion in hearing him talk of a happy eternity : and when the rector, in order to save them the trouble of a visit, offered to inform them punctually of whatever should happen to the sick man, they both answered, that far from finding any trouble in coming to see him, they reaped from it a singular profit and satisfaction. Cardinal Gonzaga, who had the gout, had himself carried to where Aloysius lay, and was always unwilling to depart from his bedside. Aloysius, indeed, in conversing with him unfolded all his heart. One day, after some talk upon the great favour God did him in taking him to himself in the flower of his youth, turning on a sudden to the cardinal, with an air full of gratitude, he told him : “ My lord, I am indebted to you for all these favours God showers down upon me. I shall ever look upon you as my father and benefactor, since by your help I surmounted those obstacles which opposed my vocation.” The cardinal was touched at these words, he melted into tears, and at last answered him : “ O, my child, I have much greater obligations to you than you to me ; age excepted, you are my father and my master in spiritual things ; nor can I express what profit and what comfort I have found both in your words and example.”

After this conversation, as they were conveying the cardinal home, he told those who conducted him, that the loss of this young man afflicted him very sensibly ; that he never left him but with a heart full of divine peace, and that of all the princes of the family, he thought him the happiest.

The visits which he received from the great ones of this world, did not make him forget those among the poor of Jesus Christ, whom he looked upon as

great in the sight of God. There was a good old man, by name F. Lewis Corbinelli, an intimate friend of Aloysius, who being now laid up with his last illness, longed earnestly to see him before he died, and not being in a condition to be removed himself, desired the infirmarian to let Aloysius be brought to him. Charity and good nature made him accept the proposal with pleasure. The good old man was exceedingly comforted by his visit and conversation. At the end of which, looking upon him with those eyes, with which we look upon a saint: "Aloysius," said he, "do not refuse me the favour I have to beg of you; it is the last. I am going to die, and I see plainly we shall never meet again in this world; give me your blessing." The young man was struck at these words, and blushing, answered: "You ask me a favour which does not become me in your regard. You are old, and I am young; you are a priest, I am not; and you know that a blessing presupposes some superiority." "Ah!" replied the father, "do not refuse me this comfort in the extremity I am in at present." The holy youth, perplexed at these warm solicitations, and, at the same time, urged by the infirmarian to content the good old father, thought the best way to extricate himself from the difficulty was, to make the sign of the cross upon himself, saying, "God bless us both;" then, sprinkling the sick with holy water, added, "may God, father, pour down his holy grace upon you, and fulfil your desires to his greater glory. Pray for me." Having spoken these words, he left him with a heart full of a most sweet consolation, in which he expired some time after, retaining this veneration for Aloysius to his last breath; for in these moments he desired that his body

might lie near that of the holy young man, whenever God should call him to himself; and his superiors complied with his pious request. Some say that Aloysius foretold that this father should die before him: certain at least it is, that the very night he departed, he imagined three times that he saw him, though he knew nothing of the extremity in which he then was; the first and second time he thought he heard him speak, and beg his prayers, in order to obtain of God the grace with which to suffer patiently pains which he said would be intolerable, unless God sustained him after an extraordinary manner; the third time, he came to tell him, that his combat was almost at an end, he desired him again to recommend him to God, and pray that he would be pleased to crown his labours.

It is believed that Aloysius knew by particular revelation, that God had vouchsafed to hear him; for father Bellarmin, asking him whether he thought Corbinelli was in purgatory, he answered so confidently, "he only passed through it," that all who knew how cautious he was in speaking and deciding, doubted not but his knowledge came from a surer source than mere conjecture. He had frequent conferences upon pious matters with his holy director; in one of which, having asked him, whether he believed there were any chosen souls wholly exempt from the pains of purgatory; that great man answered, that he did; "and I am," added he, "not only persuaded that there are, but even hope, my dear, that you yourself will be one of the number; the graces with which God has favoured you, and the secrets of your conscience, which you have been pleased to confide to me, in particular his having preserved you from mortal

sin, leave me no room to doubt but he will likewise add this favour to the former."

This answer of Bellarmin, filled him with joy. He fell immediately into a profound ecstasy, in which God gave him a foretaste of that heavenly country to which he now called him. He lay all night long in this condition, inebriated with the torrent of the ineffable gladness which rejoices the city of saints. When he came to himself, he declared to his confessor that the whole night seemed not to have lasted a moment. It is thought that in this very ecstasy, God likewise revealed to him the precise day of his departure; for after this time he told several persons very positively that he should die on the octave day of Corpus Christi. Aloysius felt as much joy, as others are accustomed to feel trouble and uneasiness at the approach of death. There is something moving in the letter he wrote to his mother upon this occasion, and it would be doing the reader an injury, not to lay it before him in the very words he wrote it.

"MY LADY AND HONOURED MOTHER IN J. C.

"The peace of our Lord be with you.

"I pray the Holy Ghost to pour down upon you grace and perpetual benediction. I was still an inhabitant of this vale of death when your last letter arrived; but I must now begin to look upon myself as an inhabitant of heaven, and prepare to enter into that land of the living, to praise God for all eternity. I did not imagine I should have held out so long; but the fever, when come to its greatest height, abating on a sudden, as I informed you in my last, carried me on to the feast of the Ascension. Since that time the humour has fallen upon my

breast, and the fever has become so violent, that it cannot be long before I go to receive the embraces of the Eternal Father, in whose bosom I hope to find secure and everlasting rest. Thus you see the report which was spread abroad concerning me, was not very wide of the truth, as I wrote to the marquis. If it be the part of true charity to weep with those that weep, and to rejoice with those that rejoice, as Saint Paul tells us, you should be exceedingly glad, my honoured mother, when you hear with what joy I find myself upon the point of entering into a state in which I shall be no longer under the apprehension of losing God. For my own part, I confess that whenever I consider the goodness of God, which I represent to myself as an immense ocean, without either shore or bottom, I am lost in the thought, incapable of comprehending how God should grant me rest without end for labour of so short a continuance—how he should be willing to give me a reward which I have so little deserved, and promise such plentiful fruit for the few tears I have shed in his service. Take care, I beseech you, lest you prove deficient in a grateful acknowledgment to this sovereign goodness; which certainly you would be guilty of by lamenting as dead, one who will be living in God, and will be of much greater service to you there above, than he could possibly be here below. Our separation will soon be over. We shall then see one another again in heaven, where, united with our Redeemer, we shall find an infinite beatitude in praising him, and singing forth his mercies for all eternity. When we view things, not with the eyes of flesh and blood, but with those of faith and religion, neither you nor I shall find any great dif-

ficulty in conforming ourselves to his will, and giving him what belongs to him. We shall make this sacrifice the more willingly, as the thing we offer is more dear to us, persuaded that God disposes of nothing but wisely and for our greater good. For he only withdraws what he has given us to put it in a place of security, and to confer upon those we love that happiness which we desire for ourselves. I write you these lines, madam, that you and all the family may look upon my departure as a great favour from the hand of God, and that, by your blessing, you may help me in the passage I am going to make out of this life to that happy shore, which I long to gain as the term of all my desires. I am the more eager to communicate these sentiments to you, because I see no better way to express that fondness and respect which a son owes his mother. I conclude by begging your blessing once again, for

“Your dutiful son,

“ALOYSIUS GONZAGA.”

These sentiments grew stronger in Aloysius, as the disease became more alarming. One of the fathers who understood medicine, having told him he could not possibly hold out more than eight days longer, the joy he felt was so great, that one of his school-fellows entering his room just at that time, he cried out to him in a kind of transport—“O! do you know the good news I have just now heard? They tell me I have only eight days to live. Pray let us say a *Te Deum* together in thanksgiving for so great a favour.” He had scarcely said the hymn, when another father entered the door, and he cried out with the same transport, “We are going, father, and we are going in gladness.” He then dic-

tated three letters, his last kind farewell, to three Jesuits, intimate friends, being through weakness obliged to sign them with a cross instead of his name. That done, he thought of nothing but of uniting himself to God by pious practices of every kind. He had a crucifix fastened at the foot of his bed, before which one of the fathers every night said the penitential psalms. Sometimes he desired them to read for him other psalms, St. Austin's soliloquies, or one of Saint Bernard's discourses upon the canticles. He was obliged all this while to receive many visits, for every one had something to say to him, and was desirous of recommending himself to his prayers. The nearer he approached his last hour, the more closely was his mind united to God by a continual exercise of contemplation and acts of love : he often repeated those words of St. Paul, "I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ." The day before his death he kept a crucifix continually upon his heart. He found a particular devotion in reciting the profession of faith, as it is in the Roman ritual, and this he often repeated during the last moments of his life. At last the octave day of Corpus Christi arrived, and they did not find him worse than ordinary. Every one now began to express their satisfaction, to tell him that he was mistaken, and hope that his prediction would prove false ; but he remained positive in assuring them that he was very near his end. "I shall die to-night," he said to a father who pitied him for a great sore, which the being obliged to lie so long in the same posture, had made in his right side ; to which the father replying, that things did not seem so far gone, he repeated twice, "I shall die to-night ; I shall die to-night."

This certainty of dying made him ask to receive the viaticum, and so earnestly, that, though with great difficulty, they at last consented. Some time before, the Pope's last blessing had been sent to him with a plenary indulgence—a present which he received indeed with joy, but not without some mixture of confusion caused by his great humility, which made him a little uneasy at the thought that the Pope should still retain any remembrance of him.

This last ceremony drew abundance of tears from all present; after which the holy young man desired to give his last embraces and take his last leave of each one in particular. There was among the rest one more intimate with Aloysius, who watched his opportunity to speak to him privately. He told him: “You are going, my dear brother, to possess God. I am sensible how much you have had my salvation at heart, while here on earth; do not forget me when in heaven: and now pardon me for having corresponded so ill with so holy an affection.” The saint answered with a most tender and holy air: “I hope, from the mercy of God, through the merits of his blood, and the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, to be in heaven in a short time. Assure yourself, that as I loved you here below, I shall still continue to love you there above, where charity is more perfect.”

The provincial entering the room about the same time, Aloysius addressed himself to him, and said: “Father, we are going.” The provincial asking him, “whither?” “To heaven,” answered the sick man, “unless my sins prevent me; but the goodness of God makes me hope.” Father Virgil Ceparì, who has written his life, presenting him a cru-

cifix, the saint pulled off his nightcap. The father imagining it was only one of those agonizing motions common enough to dying people, gently put it on. Aloysius pulled it off again; upon which, as the father told him that he ought not to lie bare-headed, exposed to the nightly air, he replied, that Jesus Christ died with his head uncovered.

It was now night, and being time for people to withdraw, they began to inquire who should watch with him. He desired one of the fathers, who stood next to his bedside, to do him that favour; and admonished another, whom he had promised to advertise when he should die, not to leave him: but the rector, not being able to persuade himself that he was so near his end as he imagined, bade every one to retire, leaving only the minister with a companion. These two fathers ever after reckoned it as an extraordinary happiness, that they were particularly chosen by Providence to receive the last breath of this just soul; and both felt upon this occasion a very sensible impression of fervour and devotion in their hearts. As long as he could speak, he entertained himself with short prayers from Scripture, suitable to his present condition; but by degrees his voice grew weaker, a great sweat succeeded, and his face turning livid, they imagined he was going to expire. He had still strength enough to let them know that his sufferings were excessive, by having remained whole days in the same spot; and he desired them to change his posture. But the fathers, afraid of hastening his death by moving him, exhorted him to remember the torture which Jesus Christ suffered, hanging and dying on the cross. These words seemed to content him; he threw his eyes upon the crucifix, and lay for some time per

fectly quiet : at last, endeavouring, as the assistants thought, to pronounce the holy name of Jesus, he gave up his soul into the hands of his Creator, on the 21st of June, in the year of our Lord 1591, being twenty-three years, three months, and eleven days old, upon Thursday night, the octave of *Corpus Christi*, as he had foretold and desired, out of his great devotion to the blessed sacrament.

The death of Aloysius excited in the minds of every one those sentiments of piety and admiration which accompany the departure of the just, whose memory is in benediction. All regarded him as a saint : they were eager to procure his relics, and flocked about the corpse to kiss his hands and feet.

The concourse at his funeral was so great that the fathers who performed the service, fearing some accident, were obliged to shut the doors. His body was put into a coffin, contrary to custom, that it might be easily known again ; nobody doubting that God would render his sanctity illustrious by miracles : nor were they deceived in their expectation.

The first miracle was in behalf of the marchioness his mother. There happened an insurrection of the inhabitants of Godfrey castle against the Châtillon family, upon the death of Rodolphus, who had succeeded his uncle Alphonsus in the possession of that estate. Grief at seeing the peace of her family thus disturbed, and her children's fortunes in such danger, threw the marchioness into a dangerous illness. Her life was despaired of, and she lay expecting death, after having received the last sacraments of the church, when her Aloysius appeared, all environed with a heavenly light. She immediately felt a sensible effect of his presence ; for her heart, till that moment so contracted with sorrow

that she could not shed a single tear, being suddenly dilated, she poured them forth in great abundance, and felt at the same time within herself, an inward assurance that she should not only recover, but even see the day when her children should be in a more flourishing condition than ever. The event verified what she felt. Contrary to the expectation of every one, she recovered, and lived to see her third son, Francis, better established than any of his predecessors, adding new lustre to the family by his virtue and merits, which gained him the love and affection of the Emperor Rodolphus II., by whom he was intrusted with many considerable employments. Our saint had always distinguished this brother by a particular affection; and among several other predictions of his, the elevation of this young prince was one. For as Francis was one day diverting himself with his playfellows, the marchioness seeing him very brisk and lively, told Aloysius, who stood by her side, that she was in pain lest the child might come to harm. "There is no danger," answered the saint; "but remark well what I tell you: Francis will be the support of our family."

It was this same Francis Gonzaga, who was the imperial ambassador to Pope Paul V., when Vincent, Duke of Mantua, came to Rome, and paid a visit to the tomb of his holy relation. In his return he fell sick at Florence, and was cured by the application of a relic of Aloysius: he received afterwards the same favour at Mantua.

The miraculous power of our saint was not confined to his family. Heaven, in many places, confirmed by undoubted prodigies, the universal opinion of his sanctity, and in Chatillion alone above forty were juridically approved, many of which the

reader may find in his life written by Cepari. Fourteen years after his death, Paul V. gave leave to expose his picture in the church of the Roman College, where it was solemnly placed near the monument lately erected to his honour. It was now a year since, by the approbation of the bishop, the same honours had been decreed him at Brescia and Chatillion. The ceremony was performed by two fathers of the order of St. Dominic with great solemnity. But the most interesting sight was the mother, who, drowned in tears of love and respect, concurred in those honours which the church so authentically paid her son; Heaven, doubtless, by so singular a privilege, beginning to reward, even in this life, the great pains which this Christian lady had taken in the education of her children, by bringing them up in piety and the fear of God.

Soon after the pope conferred upon him the title of **BLESSED**, by a brief to his brother Francis, at that time imperial ambassador; and in the year 1618, leave was granted to say mass in his honour in the churches of the Society at Rome, and throughout the estates and manors of the Gonzaga family.

This news was received with the most lively and universal joy at Chatillion. Many were still living who had seen and known the saint; some had been employed in his education, some in his service. The preceding testimonies of the church in his favour had been received with the greatest joy; but upon the present occasion their zeal seemed to know no bounds. Eight days were spent in solemnizing the feast, during which nothing was to be heard but sounds of joy and the praises of the saint. Every inhabitant of Chatillion became his panegyrist: the old told the young what they had

seen, and fathers extolled to their children the virtues of the young Marquis of Chatillion; his piety, his zeal, his charity, the generosity with which he had renounced a fine fortune, to follow Jesus Christ in the spirit of humility and poverty.

Mantua also signalized itself upon this occasion. The head of the Gonzaga family was sovereign there, and Francis de Gonzaga was their bishop, a man who, while General of the order of Saint Francis, had been intimately acquainted with St. Aloysius, and had conceived a due esteem for so extraordinary a person. Thus every thing concurred to augment the splendour of the ceremony. The duke and all the court prepared themselves for it by a fast, and, conjointly with the principal inhabitants and clergy of Mantua, chose blessed Aloysius for one of the patrons of the town.

Gregory XV., granted leave to say the mass of the saint in any church of the Society. Three nieces of our saint distinguished themselves more particularly in his honour: they instituted a congregation of nuns under his protection, which still continues to give great edification, and in which these three ladies lived and died in the reputation of sanctity.

Clement X., whom the miraculous cure of his brother, Cardinal Altieri, wrought by the intercession of our saint, had caused to be warmly devoted to him, inserted his name in the Roman Martyrology.

Things remained in this situation till Clement XI. ascended the chair of Saint Peter, when almost every Catholic prince of Christendom joined in earnest solicitations for his canonization. The General of the Jesuits intrusted the business to Father

Budrioli, whom a vow to write upon that subject had snatched from the grave, whither he would certainly have been sent by an illness of nineteen months, and frequent vomitings of blood.

It was now a hundred years since the cause had been examined by the sacred congregation of Rites, and in the court of the Rota. This latter tribunal, after a severe discussion of his virtues and miracles in twenty-three full sessions, declared, "that his holiness might with all security proceed to the canonization of Blessed Aloysius, and propose him as a model to the faithful, particularly to Christian princes, to people of distinguished quality, and to youth, both secular and religious." The congregation of Rites delivered their opinion almost in the same terms; but things at that time were carried on no farther. In the reign of Clement XI., the cause was once more brought before the tribunal of Rites, and discussed with the utmost scrupulosity. The decision of the court was much to the honour of the saint, the satisfaction of his holiness, and conformable to the universal opinion of the church, which long before seemed to have prejudged the cause. But as Rome is remarkably slow and cautious in canonizing her saints, it was agitated successively during the lives of Clement XI., and Innocent XIII., without being brought to a final issue. God had reserved that honour for Benedict XIII., a prince who, before his promotion to Saint Peter's chair, had been a distinguished client of our saint. He had long before chosen him for one of his particular patrons, and, in a convocation of his clergy, had exhorted them to follow his example. He had consecrated two magnificent altars in his honour,

one in the Jesuits' church, the other, in that of the Carmelites, and had obtained of the Sacred Congregation special leave to say mass and the divine office in his honour throughout his diocese of Benevent.

As soon as he saw himself at the head of the Church, he signified his pleasure that all the colleges of the Society should choose Blessed Aloysius for their protector; which was first performed at Rome on the 26th of June, in the year 1725, and ordered the whole process relating to his canonization to be laid before him. One year more was spent in discussing former examinations, his virtues and miracles at different tribunals; when at last, no difficulty nor objection appearing from any side, with the concurring testimony of every court, his holiness, after the pontifical mass, published the bull of his canonization in the year 1726, on the 20th of April, the anniversary of the day on which he had received the stole of baptismal innocence, which dying he carried unspotted to the tribunal of Jesus Christ.

God had long before revealed to Saint Mary Magdalen de Pazzis, a saint whose conversation seemed rather in heaven than on earth, that the glory of Saint Aloysius was very eminent. On the fourth of April, in the year 1600, she was rapt into an ecstasy, saw heaven opened and the glory of St. Aloysius: in astonishment at so extraordinary a sight, she began to say slowly, making an occasional pause between her words.

“O what glory is that of Aloysius, the son of Ignatius! I could never have conceived it unless my Jesus had revealed it. Fain would I fly all the world over to declare that Aloysius, the son of Ignatius, is a great saint. O that to all nations I could

proclaim his happiness, that God may be glorified. He is exalted to this pitch of glory, because he led an interior life. Who can tell the inestimable value of an interior life? between the interior and exterior there is no comparison. Aloysius, while here below, kept his eye constantly fixed upon the Word divine. . He was a hidden martyr; for to one who loves thee, O my God, it is a martyrdom to see that he does not love thee as he desires to love thee, and that thy creatures, far from loving thee as they ought, daily offend thee. Aloysius was likewise a martyr by the austerity of his life. O! how he loved on earth, and now enjoys God in the satiety of love. While on earth he continually sent up darts of love to the divine Word, and now those darts return to settle in his own heart and fill it with gladness."

Here the saint seeing that Aloysius prayed fervently for those who had formerly assisted him in the way of virtue, added: "And I will likewise to the best of my power help souls, that when any of them go to heaven, they may pray for me, as Aloysius now prays for those who have been of service to him."

A PRAYER TO ST. ALOYSIUS GONZAGA.

O ANGELICAL St. Aloysius ! I, your most humble client, recommend to you, in a particular manner, the purity of my body and soul : I beseech you, by your angelic chastity, to recommend me to Jesus Christ, the immaculate Lamb, and to his blessed mother, the virgin of virgins, and to preserve me from all sin. Never permit me to be defiled by any stain of impurity ; but when you see me exposed to temptation, and the danger of sin, remove far from my heart all impure thoughts and affections ; and, renewing in me the remembrance of eternity, and of Christ crucified, imprint deeply in my soul the fear of God, and enkindle within me the fire of divine love. Amen. Pater and Ave.

His holiness Pius VII. granted in perpetuity one hundred days' indulgence, applicable in form of suffrage, to the souls in purgatory, which may be gained once on any day on which the above prayer, and a Pater and Ave are devoutly recited with a contrite heart.

HYMN TO ST. ALOYSIUS GONZAGA.

- 1 His infant words, the first he frames,
 He utters with a trembling voice ;
 Jesus and Mary ! hallowed names,
 Dwell on his lips, and speak his choice.

Chorus.

Amiable and angelic youth,
 Aloysius, pray for us.

- 2 Charm'd with the Deity alone,
Terrestrial pursuits he forsakes,
And ere yet half to manhood grown,
His virgin vows to Mary makes.
Chorus. Amiable, &c.
- 3 So faithful to internal light
Or an incarnate angel, he
The tenor of his life so bright,
Or soul imbodied seems to be.
Chorus. Amiable, &c.
- 4 No titles him, nor honours move,
No worldly charms his mind allure;
The ties of blood but serve to prove
His soul on every side secure.
Chorus. Amiable, &c.
- 5 Enamour'd of celestial joys,
Let pride and wealth my choice withstand
I scorn their gifts, they are but toys,
He said, and joins Loyola's band.
Chorus. Amiable, &c.
- 6 To gain perfection's utmost height,
He tries, nor was his trial vain,
Of sanctity a model bright,
He stands a mirror clear of stain.
Chorus. Amiable, &c.
- 7 To Jesus' venerable name
May endless love and praise accrue,
To all the Trinity the same:
To Aloysius honour due.
Chorus. Amiable, &c.

DEVOTION TO ST. ALOYSIUS.

The Devout Client's Address to St. Aloysius.

ANGELICAL youth, Aloysius, by the particular appointment of God's Vicar upon earth, patron of those who apply to studies; thou who hast illustrated the church by a holy contempt of an earthly principality, but more by the innocence of thy manners, sanctity of thy life, and glory of thy miracles, allow me from this day to choose and adopt thee patron and protector of my life and studies, firmly resolved to follow the example and pattern, as well of piety, as of industry, thou hast set before me. For the love thou hast for Christ crucified, and his most blessed Mother, receive me as thy client and obedient servant, aid and assist me in the pursuit of virtue and learning. Nourish and increase in me a purity of body and mind; turn off the snares laid against my chastity; ward and defend me against the dangers of the world; inspire my heart with a true and filial confidence in the ever blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of good counsel; govern and direct me in my choice of a state of life, and let the grace of God be my perpetual defence against all mortal sin; that as thou always didst live in a state of purity and integrity truly angelical, so, assisted by thy patronage, and aided by the grace of God, I may live chastely and holily in this world, and deserve to be associated with thee and joined to the company of the Angels in Heaven Amen.

THE LITANY OF ST. ALOYSIUS.

LORD, have mercy on us.

Christ, have mercy on us.

Lord, have mercy on us.

Christ, hear us.

Christ, graciously hear us.

God the Father of Heaven, have mercy on us

God the Son, Redeemer of the world, have mercy
on us.

God the Holy Ghost, have mercy on us.

Holy Trinity, one God, have mercy on us.

Holy Mary,

Holy Mother of God,

Holy Virgin of Virgins,

St. Aloysius,

Most beloved of Christ,

The delight of the blessed Virgin

Most chaste youth,

Angelical youth,

Most humble youth,

Model of young students,

Despiser of Riches,

Enemy of vanities,

Scorner of honours,

Honour of princes,

Jewel of the nobility,

Flower of innocence,

Ornament of a religious state

Mirror of mortification,

Mirror of perfect obedience,

Lover of evangelical poverty,

Pray for us.

Most affectionately devout,
 Most zealous observer of the rules,
 Most desirous of the salvation of souls,
 Perpetual adorér of the Eucharist,
 Particular client of St. Ignatius,
 Be merciful unto us, O Lord.
 Graciously hear us, O Lord.

} Pray for us.

From the concupiscence of the eyes, O Lord, deliver us.

From the concupiscence of the flesh, O Lord, deliver us.

From the pride of life, O Lord, deliver us.

By the merits and intercession of St. Aloysius, O Lord, deliver us.

By his angelical purity, O Lord, deliver us.

By his sanctity and glory, O Lord, deliver us.

We sinners beseech thee to hear us.

Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, spare us, O Lord.

Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, graciously hear us, O Lord.

Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

Christ, hear us.

Christ, graciously hear us.

Lord, have mercy on us.

Christ, have mercy on us.

Lord, have mercy us.

Our Father, &c.

V. Pray for us, St. Aloysius.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray.

O GOD! the distributor of heavenly gifts, who didst join in the angelical youth Aloysius, wonderful innocence of life with an equal severity of penance; grant through his merits and prayers, that we, who have not followed the example of his innocence, may imitate his practice of penance, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

After the canonization of the angelical youth Aloysius, which was decreed by his holiness Benedict XIII., with a particular view, among many other laudable motives, to offer to the imitation and veneration, especially of young persons, a youth most conspicuous for his innocence of life; young persons were not the only votaries of a saint, who seemed to be appointed their peculiar patron: the devotion soon became general, and common to all. In order to promote and encourage the same by the concurrence of the apostolic see, Clement XII. extended the plenary indulgence granted by his predecessor to any one, who on his feast should visit his altar; to those also who should pray before an altar, where his feast happened to be kept.

Heaven seemed to give its sanction to this zeal of the faithful, by frequent and wonderful favours granted and obtained through his powerful intercession, and the pious custom of assigning six Sundays without intermission in honour of the Saint, in memory of the six years he lived in the Society of Jesus, was introduced and observed. How agreeable a devotion of this nature was, to St. Aloysius, has been shown by many and very signal blessings bestowed

on his clients ; so that the same C ement XII., as he himself speaks, to nourish so salutary a practice towards St. Aloysius, approved from Heaven by many favours, as well spiritual as temporal, has granted plenary indulgences on each of the above Sundays, to them who, by a true and sincere repentance, by a worthy communion, by a serious application to mental or vocal prayer, and other good works of piety, performed in honour of the Saint, and directed to the glory of God, shall sanctify the said days.

The manner of performing the devotion of the six Sundays, is as follows.

1. On each of these Sundays, let the person who performs this devotion, choose St. Aloysius for his patron, and receive the sacraments of penance and the holy eucharist.

2. On that day, let him be present either at some confraternity or sodality, or at least hear a mass in honour of the saint.

3. Let him recite on each day, either before some image of the saint, or in the church, six Our Fathers and Hail Marys, and as often, Glory be to the Father, &c., the litany of the saint, &c.

4. Let him perform some work of mercy, spiritual or corporal, according to his ability, and as his devotion shall suggest.

5. Let him spend some time in meditating ; and for the subject of his meditation on each Sunday, let him take one of the virtues which St. Bonaventure finds expressed in the wings of the seraphim, seen by the prophet Isaiah. These virtues are : compunction of heart, sanctification of penance, purity of body, purity of mind, love of God, and love of our neighbour. With these virtues, as

with so many wings, did the angelical youth Aloysius fly to that height of perfection, as to resemble in some manner the very angels themselves.

A PRAYER.

To be said each Sunday, after the six Our Fathers and Hail Marys, &c., and as often, Glory be to the Father, &c.

ANGELICAL youth, most loving protector and powerful advocate, Aloysius! as thy most unworthy servant and client, yet sensible of the favour thou enjoyest with God, the just reward of thy merit, I humbly prostrate myself before the throne of thy glory. I rejoice from my soul not only for the renown of thy name, illustrious upon earth by frequent and glorious prodigies; but also am overjoyed for the sublime pre-eminence, with which God has been pleased to crown thy virtues in heaven. Praise and glory be to the most sacred Trinity, who embellished thy soul with a most admirable innocence, and with so many most heroic virtues. Blessed be the eternal Father, who is well pleased in thee, his adoptive child, adorned with so singular prerogatives. Blessed be God the Son, who sees in thee so pure and so abundant fruit of his precious blood and passion. Blessed be the Holy Ghost, who resided in thee after a particular manner, and inflamed thy heart with an ardent love and charity. By these so singular favours: by thy innocence and penance equally admirable; by that love of God, which burned in thy breast; by his love for thee, and by the unspeakable bliss and happiness thou enjoyest in heaven give me leave in a

suppliant manner to entreat thy goodness to obtain for me a true contrition and repentance, an undefiled purity of heart, and a conscience free from sin and all offence of God. Be thou ever present to me; protect and defend me, as well in life as in death, when my weakness will stand most in need of, and call for, thy powerful assistance. Let me also, my dear and indulgent patron, most earnestly beg the particular grace of N. N. which I confidently hope to obtain through thy holy intercession.

O Queen of Heaven, Virgin Mother! who so much lovedst Aloysius, intercede with thy only begotten Son, that under thy patronage some weight may be added to my poor and unworthy prayers: grant this my request, founded not on my own, which are none, but the merits of St. Aloysius. O most holy Virgin! may all know and be sensible, that thou wouldst have Aloysius honoured and respected, and that, as a true mother, thou embracest such as have recourse to his protection and patronage. May the number of the faithful, who honour thee, O queen of angels! and the angelical Aloysius here on earth, be daily increased, and may they yet more praise and glorify you both in heaven for all eternity. Amen.

NOVENA TO ST. ALOYSIUS.

The first prayer of this novena is found page 114, beginning, Angelical youth, Aloysius, &c., then say the following prayer.

I ACKNOWLEDGE, O eternal God! that all things I have, or can possess, come from thy merciful goodness I adore all thy divine perfections. I

firmly believe that I am in thy sacred presence, that thou beholdest all my actions, and the most secret desires of my heart. I moreover believe without doubting, all the sacred truths the holy Catholic and Apostolic Church believes and teaches, because thou, O my God ! hast revealed them, who neither canst deceive nor be deceived.

I am sensible, O my dearest Saviour ! that my past sins and infidelities have rendered me disgusting in thy divine eyes. Because they caused thy cruel sufferings, thy bitter death and passion, I most sincerely detest and hate them. Have mercy on my soul, dearest Saviour, redeemed with thy precious blood : I firmly purpose never more to plunge it into like guilt, but diligently to fly every occasion of sin. I do resolve to confess all my crimes, and to make satisfaction for them. It is not upon any merits of my own that I confide, but, O merciful Redeemer ! I trust in thy promises and goodness, in thy sufferings, in thy precious blood, to obtain pardon for these my sins, and grace to amend my life, and persevere with fidelity in thy service to my last breath. Amen.

O Glorious St. Aloysius ! appointed by the Church of Christ, as a worthy advocate for her children, intercede for me ; obtain for me what I ask in this novena, if it be for the glory of God and the good of my soul ; or at least, O faithful servant of God ! direct my request, that it may turn to the honour of my dear and blessed Redeemer, that through thy patronage he may see in me the effect of his sacred passion and blood.

Omnipotent and eternal God of heaven and earth ! who hast been pleased to adorn the ever glorious

Virgin Mary with the treasures of heaven, making her a fit habitation for thy divine Son; permit thy servant to offer to thee those virtues which rendered her most pleasing in thy sight; accept in my behalf her pure virginity, her perfect obedience and humility, her poverty, and sufferings, together with the innocence, penance, and perfect resignation of thy worthy St. Aloysius. I beseech thee, grant me a true compunction of heart, give me a true spirit of mortification and humility, that may despise all worldly things, and rest in thee alone. Grant me also the petition I make in this novena, to thy greater honour and glory. Amen.

Here say six times, Our Father, and Hail Mary, &c., and as often, Glory be to the Father, &c., to these subjoin the prayer, beginning, Angelical Youth, most loving protector, &c., page 114, and the Litany of St. Aloysius, and terminate on each day the Prayers for the Novena, by this Antiphon to our Blessed Lady.

Hail, holy Queen! Mother of mercy, our life, our sweetness, and our hope. To thee we cry, poor banished sons of Eve. To thee we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping, in this valley of tears; turn, then, most gracious advocate, thy eyes of mercy towards us; and after this our exile ended, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus, O most clement, most pious, and most sweet Virgin Mary!

Vrs. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God!

Resp. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray.

O Almighty and eternal God! who, by the co-operation of the Holy Ghost, didst prepare the body and soul of the glorious Virgin Mary, to become a worthy habitation of thy divine Son, grant that we, who rejoice in her commemoration, may, through her intercession, be delivered from present evils and eternal death, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Vers. May the divine assistance remain always with us. Amen.

Those who make this Novena are advised to conform their lives to a practice of those virtues recommended in the six Sundays

THE SIX SUNDAYS OF ST. ALOYSIUS

* CONSIDERATION FOR THE FIRST SUNDAY.

St. Aloysius an example of compunction of heart.

ADMIRABLE was Aloysius in this virtue, considering, 1st. The object of his sorrow; 2d. The sincerity and intenseness of his sorrow; 3d. The continuance and perseverance of his sorrow.

Consider, 1st, What was the object of his sorrow? small faults, which worldlings hardly believe to be faults.

At four or five years of age, he had taken by

* These Considerations are selected from the life of St. Aloysius. It is greatly recommended to all those who make this devotion, that they would frequently occupy themselves in reading attentively the life of this saint; particularly during the time their devotion continues

stealth some powder from the pouches of the soldiers, to fire a small field-piece, which was allowed him for diversion, and with a view of training him up for the army. He had also been heard to utter some improper expressions, which occasionally he had picked up from among the soldiers, though without reflection on the import and meaning of them. Nevertheless, he bitterly bewailed these two faults, during his whole ensuing life.

Consider, 2d, That although the faults of St. Aloysius were small, his sorrow was most intense and sincere. So lively was his sorrow, that entering upon a general confession of his whole life, at Florence, he was seized with so great a flow of grief, and overwhelmed with such a torrent of tears, that, unable to support the anguish, he fainted away, and was obliged, not only to interrupt, but to delay his confession, already begun, to a further time; and ever after, a sincere grief, expressed by sighs and tears, attended the remembrance of his past faults.

Consider, 3d, The continuance of his repentance. He never ceased to repent, till he ceased to live. Often was he heard to say, with tears in his eyes: "Thy judgments, O God, are a deep abyss: Who knows, if the sins I committed before my entrance into religion are yet forgiven!" His fear was, lest he should be cast off by Almighty God, and accounted in the number of the reprobate."

REFLECTIONS AND RESOLUTIONS,

For the first week's devotion in honour of St. Aloysius.

St. Aloysius gives me an example of compunction of heart. Is it not the will of Heaven that I should

regulate myself by it?—I have sinned—of consequence sorrow and repentance are required. You, devout Christian, who may read and consider this, say daily to yourself: unless I sincerely repent of my sins, I shall be miserable for an endless eternity. I possess, at this moment, the best occasion of giving myself to my Lord and Creator, under the protection and example of St. Aloysius; unless I use it, I may expose myself to infinite dangers: I will also reflect, that the bitter afflictions and tears of my Divine Redeemer, his sacred body wounded and bleeding for my salvation, will not save me, unless I sincerely repent—O! is it not better for me to imitate St. Aloysius in my repentance, than to frustrate the design of my merciful Redeemer in dying for me? All my Saviour has done increases the eternal damnation of the wicked, because they would not repent and return from their sins. Alas! what an unhappy thought for me, to be obliged to reflect, when I am in eternal misery, that I am here, because I would not do what I can now perform with so much ease. I will daily humble myself before God, whom I have so often offended—I will offer to him sincere grief and sorrow for my past sins; resolving to make amends, inasmuch as I can, by my fervour and devotion. I will often say, from the sincerity of my heart, “Permit, O Lord, that my love and affection in serving thee, may equal (if possible) my malice in having offended thee.”—I will be exact in my examination at night, and excite a lively sorrow for my repeated sins: particularly, I resolve never to retire to bed, without begging pardon of my Lord and Creator, for those offences of my past life, which I know to be the most displeasing to him. I will wish and

endeavour to excite that compunction of heart, which St. Aloysius experienced, and beg the same through his holy intercession.

CONSIDERATION FOR THE SECOND SUNDAY.

St. Aloysius an example of Mortification.

Consider what was his mortification : 1st, In the world ; 2d, In a religious state ; 3d, On his death-bed.

Consider, 1st. That every Christian is commanded and instructed by his divine Redeemer, to walk in the "straight way that leads to life." Matt. vii. 14. In consequence, the spirit of Christianity is a spirit of mortification and austerity. Under the influence of divine grace, Aloysius was early imbued with this heavenly doctrine. He practised the most rigid austerities from his infancy, even in the world ; and though heir to a considerable principality, notwithstanding the opposite allurements of a splendid and magnificent court, he treated his body, innocent as it was, with the most strict severity. His disciplines were frequent and bloody ; his fasts almost continual, his very refec- tion was so sparing, that it never exceeded the quantity of one ounce at any set meal. When deprived of his usual instruments of mortification, he was ever ingenious in finding out means to supply their want. Instead of hair shirts, he would make use of small iron spikes and rowels of spurs, and would strew his bed with chips of wood, that his very rest might have a uniformity with his other

actions, which were ever seasoned with mortification.

Consider, 2d, That Aloysius in a religious state, with due subordination to superiors, continued on and practised the same rigorous austerities towards himself. No action seemed to please him, unless it was accompanied with some mortification. Besides fasting, iron chains, and disciplines, he would find out some means or other to afflict his body, in what posture soever it was, and would not let slip out of his hands any opportunity of overcoming himself; subduing all the motions of his heart, and subjecting his own will and inclination. To such as seemed surprised at his austerities, he would now and then answer, "It is practice and custom that make these things easy and agreeable; neglect and disuse render them hard and difficult."

Consider, 3d, The mortification of Aloysius, at the point of death. From the knowledge of these astonishing mortifications of this saint, many imagined that at the hour of his death he would be somewhat anxious and troubled, as if by these voluntary chastisements he had shortened his life. On the contrary, having received the last sacraments of the Church, he declared, "That, far from being disturbed and troubled at the mortifications he had inflicted on himself, his only concern was, that he had omitted many austerities which his strength probably would have been able to support." Wherefore he then begged his superior would order him a discipline. This was not at that time to be granted. His request then was, that he might be allowed, like a true penitent and a faithful follower of his divine Master, to breathe out his last on the bare ground.

REFLECTIONS AND RESOLUTIONS,

For the second week's Devotion in honour of St. Aloysius.

WHAT the world may say, ought I, as a Christian, to regard? Remember that it is the undoubted sign and mark of predestination, according to St. Paul, (Gal. v. 24,) that "those who are Christ's, have crucified their flesh, with its vices and lusts;" of consequence, to avoid sin, and to be a disciple of Jesus Christ, I must oppose with vigour my evil inclinations; I must deny that freedom and liberty to my senses which I have often indulged. Had I done this on such and such particular occasions, in my conversations with others, in my ways of acting with them and myself, I had never excited the anger of Almighty God so frequently against myself. What trouble! at the hour of my death, to know I am going to step into an eternity of misery, because I did not mortify my will, and strictly adhere to the solemn renunciations I made at my baptism. I promised to the Church of Christ, that I would renounce the world with its pomps, the devil and his works, the flesh and its pleasures. Alas! can I do it without constant mortification? A Christian contemplating the sufferings of his crucified Redeemer in order to destroy sin, can he refuse to curb his inclinations to it?—warned by the dreadful example of the damned, can he still refuse to oppose with vigour his evil inclinations? No, my God, I was made to serve and love thee alone. I will ever resist the very first incitement to vice, and bring my body into servitude: I will often remember during this week, what I now promise, repeat the same, and offer the affections of my heart to my Lord and Creator: my mortification in so doing is

short; my happiness will be eternal. St. Aloysius, by mortification, secured to himself innocence and felicity: his trouble is now passed; his reward never will end. Ought I not to do the same, if I wish the same eternal recompense? How much shall I wish, during an unhappy eternity, that I had followed this example of St. Aloysius, and through mortification and self-denial had obliged my soul to be obsequious to the merciful designs of Almighty God. This I will do at present, and will repeatedly say, I offer to thee, O my God, these resolutions; strengthen me in thy mercy, to correspond; bless me as thou didst bless St. Aloysius. I will daily beg this favour through the intercession of St. Aloysius.

CONSIDERATION FOR THE THIRD SUNDAY.

St. Aloysius an example of purity of body.

ST. ALOYSIUS possessed this virtue, 1st, Without blemish; 2d, By a singular privilege; 3d, He preserved it by the utmost vigilance.

Consider, 1st, That St. Aloysius, although eminent in all kinds of virtue, seems chiefly to have excelled in that of chastity and purity of body. From his earliest youth, his own domestics, and all who knew him, could not help admiring the innocence of his morals; they commonly called him, the little prince exempt from the weakness of the flesh. The holy church does not doubt to style him an Angelical Youth, and that too in her most solemn and public service. No one dared to pronounce a word that savoured the least of immodesty, or even had a tendency that way, in his presence; they knew

that nothing could displease or offend him more. Cardinal Bellarmine, his director in matters of conscience, a most wise and prudent man, (so little could he observe in him of that frailty, which is common to others,) hesitates not to declare, that he looked upon him as confirmed in the favour and grace of his Creator.

Consider, 2d, How singular were the prerogatives with which God adorned the purity of his servant. In his tender years, he consecrated himself, at Florence, to the mother of purity, who seems in a particular manner to have rewarded him on that account. The acts of his canonization testify, that no one was ever more privileged—reflect on the words themselves: “Aloysius never suffered in his body the stings of the flesh, and never had in his mind an impure thought; which thing we read not in the lives of other saints.” Such are the gifts of God, such those in particular that are imparted to us through the hands of the most pure Virgin, in themselves singular and angelical.

Consider, 3d, With what care and diligence did St. Aloysius preserve this beloved and precious treasure of purity. No passage or entrance was left open; no advantage given to his enemies; he kept a strict guard over all his senses; in particular over his eyes, as the most dangerous inlet. When page to Empress Mary of Austria, upon whom he waited many years, he never even looked her in the face: nor was he less circumspect or more off his guard, when he spoke and conversed with his own mother. He kept his eyes modestly inclined towards the ground, in such sort that the greatest part of those that frequented his company, could not say what colour they were of. Being once prevailed upon to

go to a ball he soon found an expedient to withdraw from the company, and betake himself in private to prayer. In fine, he was on all occasions full of care and circumspection: he showed a diffidence in himself similar to one walking in a difficult and slippery path; holding in his hand a frail vessel filled with precious liquor.

REFLECTIONS AND RESOLUTIONS,

For the third week's Devotion in honour of St. Aloysius.

OUGHT I not to follow this striking example of St. Aloysius? He was moderate in conversation, considerate in action, mild in countenance, watchful over his senses; in every gesture and motion of his body, he showed himself an Angelical Youth. Such was Aloysius; and as such, devout Christian, you ought to admire and love him. By this conduct he preserved from every blemish the inestimable virtue of purity of body; which, devout Christian, respectively to your state of life, is necessary for your eternal salvation. I will reflect, that to adhere to my loving Redeemer, and to please him, I must love purity. I must cherish and embrace this Heavenly virtue, with the whole affections of my soul. I must offer him a heart which sincerely detests the smallest incitements towards impurity. If I have unhappily sinned in this particular, I must daily bemoan and lament my misfortune, and be confounded at my base ingratitude, for loving so vile an object more than God. The whole world cannot satisfy for the least of these sins. Thousands are buried in Hell for this dreadful sin. I shall be there, unless I make use of the goodness of God. He does not punish me, because he wishes to see me return

and save my sou.. How foolish is it for me to damn myself for a shameful action ! O my soul ! what a miserable condition is that, where the pleasure passes in a moment, to make place for eternal punishment ! Hereafter, whatever temptations I experience, I will call upon the sweet names of Jesus and Mary. During the temptation, I will frequently say, O good Jesus ! have pity on me. At other times, I will repeat, O my loving Saviour ! take my heart to thyself ; thou hast loved me upon thy cross. Do not permit, that I should love these filthy thoughts : or, O most holy Mary ! my dearest Mother ! defend me from this beastly enemy, who wishes to make me trample under my feet, and despise the precious blood which thy beloved Son shed for my salvation. Take pity on me, O holy Mary ! defend me from his rage. I will take my eyes from the objects which cause these incitements, and will treat these objects with disdain, both by my interior and exterior actions. If I be much importuned by these temptations, I will resist with double vigour. I will think, if possibly I can, how dreadful for me to suffer forever the torments of hell ; and if I sin, such is my lot. If it be in my power, I will cast my eyes upon a crucifix, and say, My God hangs upon a cross for me ; can I, in his sight, give way to this shameful sin ?—I will imagine that I hear as many voices, as I see wounds in the body of my Saviour, saying to me : My dear beloved child, throw aside that thought ; am I not wounded enough to gain heaven for you ? why will you expose your soul and body to eternal ruin ? Is my blood for your salvation, my love for you of less value, than that base action to which you are inclined ? Whatever it costs me, I will keep myself united to God, and

with vigour engage myself in works suitable to my situation of life. I will, during this week, daily beg this great virtue through the intercession of St. Aloysius.

CONSIDERATION FOR THE FOURTH SUNDAY.

St. Aloysius an example of purity of mind.

ST. ALOYSIUS was eminent in this virtue ; 1st, By a total disengagement from worldly vanity ; 2d, By renouncing the world ; 3d, By an intimate union with God.

Consider, 1st, That St. Aloysius, from his youth seemed to possess a knowledge of the vanities of the world. Of this he showed evident signs, by publicly despising its pomps and honours. What engrosses the minds and attention of other mortals, as power, riches, command, and the like, were of no estimate or merit with him. The rich, particularly, who, whilst they might gain eternal wealth, remained lost and bewildered in the pursuit of what was vile and transient, were so many objects of his disdain and compassion. Aloysius was not less opposite to them in his life, than contrary to them in his morals. His delight was to resemble the poor ; he chose for himself the meanest dress, in the midst of the greatest splendour, to show that he cordially despised worldly greatness. What could he with affection behold on earth, whose thoughts and desires were centred in heaven.

Consider, 2d, That his disengagement from worldly vanity caused him in a short time to make a total renouncement of the world. Deliberating

with himself on the choice of a state of life, he addressed his prayers to our Blessed Lady, and placed himself under her care and direction. On the feast of her sacred Assumption, he clearly saw himself invited and called to the Society of Jesus. Great were the obstacles and difficulties he had to surmount, in order to obey this call. The obstinacy of his father in refusing his consent, for the space of three whole years, was not brought to yield, but by constant prayer, tears, and rigorous mortifications. In fine, St. Aloysius publicly divests himself of the principality which by birth devolved to him, and transferred his right to his younger brother; then, from amidst the common tears of a large assembly, he betakes himself to the Society of Jesus; exchanging the affluence, ease, and splendour of a court, for the poverty, mortification, and humility of a religious life.

Consider, 3d, That this purity of mind, which St. Aloysius possessed in so perfect a manner, received its source from the saint's intimate union with God. Whilst a child, he oftentimes passed whole hours in contemplation of the divine perfections of Almighty God, exciting tears of tenderness and love towards him. His thoughts were continually on God. His countenance would be inflamed and burn: his soul would melt and dissolve away at the memory only, or mention of his Creator, who was ever before his eyes and present to his heart. An uninterrupted conversation with God ran through and accompanied his whole life. In prayer especially, he was so absorbed in the object of his love, that no distraction could avert his mind. Of this we have the authentic testimony in the acts of his canonization, which declare, "that he was

free from distractions and dissipations of mind in prayer;"—a favour he had purchased not without toil and labour.

REFLECTIONS AND RESOLUTIONS,

For the fourth week's Devotion in honour of St. Aloysius.

THE example St. Aloysius gives me, of purity of mind, deserves my most serious reflections. By possessing this great virtue, my soul is raised to a union with God; she is carried with the influence of divine grace to condemn the follies of this world, to despise its perishable objects, to seek her Lord and Creator; in every action, to aim at his love and service. It is vain for me to think I do this, unless all my actions are done purely to honour and glorify Almighty God. Remember, devout Christian, you were made to enjoy things eternal; what folly then for you to give your heart to the vain objects of a passing world! The smallest action I now perform, if done for Almighty God, will add to my glory for an endless eternity: whereas, whatever I do for the world will make me unhappy as long as God exists. My soul is worth more than all the riches, honours, and pleasures of the world, because all these things will perish, but my soul will never die. Ought I not then to unite my soul to Almighty God, without whom I shall ever be miserably unhappy? There is no other way to heaven. If I would be with God in heaven, I must not separate him from me on earth. My loving Creator deserves that I should think of him, that I should present him my thoughts, my words, and my actions; and he promises to reward them all with an eternity of glory. Can any one, favoured as I am

by Almighty God, refuse him so small a thing? No; I sincerely purpose to be more mindful of this for the future. I will often ask myself the question, Where is my God? Is he present with me in these actions? Are they offered to him? Are they pleasing to him? Do I seek his glory and a greater union with him in performing them? I am to render him a most strict account of all my thoughts, words, and actions. I will often make Acts of Faith of this truth, and say within myself, I believe, O my God! that I am to give a strict account of all I do, because you have said that you will judge all men according to their works. Short aspirations, often repeated during my actions, would bring upon me the greatest blessings of God. Eternally happy is St. Aloysius, because he despised the world and its passing pomps and vanities. He pitied worldlings in their blindness, who strove to content their immortal souls with the perishable objects of riches, honours, pleasures, dress, &c. Unhappy for me, if my desire of any one of these things should cause my damnation. If I will absolutely seek God with as much zeal as worldlings seek and nourish vanity, I shall be ever happy. I ought in consequence to engage myself to follow the example of St. Aloysius, and daily beg this favour through his powerful intercession.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE FIFTH SUNDAY.

St. Aloysius an example of charity towards his neighbour.

THE charity of St. Aloysius towards his neighbour was, 1st, Patient; 2d, It was industrious 3d, It was generous.

Consider, 1st, He who knows not how to bear with the defects and failures of others, does not possess the virtue of charity. The first quality ascribed to Christian charity by St. Paul, is, that "charity is patient." 1 Cor. xiii. 14. It may be affirmed that St. Aloysius carried this virtue to an eminent degree. He suffered not only with patience every contempt, outrage, and insult, but showed on those occasions an exterior cheerfulness of countenance—a disposition not at all to be ascribed to his temper and complexion, (that being naturally somewhat warm and hasty, as on occasions he had showed,) but was entirely the effect of frequent meditation, and the use he had made of his particular examen, in which he took that under a special and daily consideration. Hence he had so absolute a command over himself, that the very first motions of anger, not always voluntary and in our power, either could not be observed in him, or were under the strictest subjection.

Consider, 2dly, His charity was active and industrious in finding out means to relieve his neighbours in their wants. Their sufferings affected him as if they were his own, particularly if the danger or damage turned upon their souls.

Aloysius, even when a child, was remarkable for his compassionate tenderness. He would, notwithstanding his high birth, mix with the ignorant and grosser sort of men, instruct them in the heads of Christian doctrine, reprove their vices, settle differences, disputes, or disagreements, too common among them. Much more did he practise this when at Rome and in the Society, drawing all to the love of God, and the frequent and due use of the sacraments.

Consider, 3dly, The most generous and heroic deed of Christian charity is to sacrifice our lives in the service of our neighbour. The charity of St. Aloysius extended to this sublime degree of perfection. Whilst the plague infested Rome, he obtained leave of his superiors to serve such as were infected—a labour he embraced with so much alacrity, that the more vile the service was, the more it seemed agreeable to him; the more abject and abandoned the object, the greater was his care and vigilance. He measured his labour, not by his own strength, but by the want and call of others. We may truly say, that he laid his life down in the discharge of so charitable an employ: for, having taken the distemper, the infection thereof soon put an end to his life.

REFLECTIONS AND RESOLUTIONS,

For the fifth week's Devotion in honour of St. Aloysius.

WHAT a comfort to a pious client of St. Aloysius to contemplate his patron at the hour of death! This holy saint expressed his gladness of soul on the approach of that happy moment, in which he was to enter into the eternal enjoyment of his Creator. This favour he received in the exercise of love towards his neighbour. I ought to remember, that if I wish a like happiness at my death, I must imitate Aloysius in the exercise of this virtue. To convince myself of this truth, I will often and seriously reflect on the many motives I have for loving and assisting my neighbour.

1st, He bears within him the image and likeness of my Creator. 2d, He is redeemed with the precious blood of my Saviour. 3d, He is intended by Almighty God to possess an eternal happiness

Being thus the favourite of Heaven, can I omit seeking his protection? I will also reflect, that to secure my salvation, I must religiously observe these three commands of my loving Redeemer:—1st, I must love my neighbour as myself. Matt. xxii. 2d, I must do as I would be done by. Matt. vii. 3d, I must love my neighbour as Christ has loved me. John xiii. I ought to blush not to co-operate with my blessed Redeemer in the salvation of those with whom I live. If I love my Saviour as I ought, I shall love all those for whom he suffered, and shall find myself inclined to repeat frequently; “O my loving Redeemer, permit me to bring others to know, to love, and to serve thee.” What comfort for me, especially at my death, and during the whole length of eternity, if I could be the cause of the happiness of any one person, either by my example, my discourse, or prayers! How pleasing would it be to Jesus Christ to see (by my means) the happy effects of his precious blood in the salvation of this soul! This I can do with the assistance of Heaven, by my sweetness of manners, by good example at all times, and by my edifying discourses on certain occasions. On the other hand, the blood of my crucified Redeemer will turn to my destruction if I injure my neighbour, or cause, or partake in his sins. I will make it my duty to humble myself on account of my many sins of detraction; and will endeavour, by a mild and sweet disposition, joined to a virtuous example in all my actions, to make atonement and reparation. I will impress these sentiments upon my heart. I will often say, “I cannot love God unless I love my neighbour.” I will daily pray for this virtue, through the intercession of St. Aloysius.

CONSIDERATION FOR THE SIXTH SUNDAY.

St. Aloysius an example of the love we owe to God.

ST. ALOYSIUS loved most tenderly the bounty and goodness of God—1st, in itself; 2d, in Christ crucified; 3d, in Jesus Christ hidden in the most holy sacrament of the altar.

Consider, 1st, Aloysius, who excelled in all other virtues, was eminently conspicuous and truly seraphic in the love of God. He was so affected and transported with this holy flame, that when he thought of God, or heard others speak of him, his countenance was on fire, his voice and breath seemed to be intercepted, and his heart (struggling as it were to get out of its confinement) beat with violence. His superiors obliged him to moderate this heat, which exhausted and consumed the poor remains of strength left in him, and at certain intervals to divert his mind from a continual meditation on his Creator.

Consider, 2d, The goodness of God, which appears most remarkable in our crucified Saviour, was the nourishment that maintained and increased the love of God in Aloysius. If our saint was pleased with the thought and contemplation of the great humility, sufferings, and bitter passion of Christ crucified; he was not less delighted in the prospect and desire of following an example laid before him by so admirable an instructor. He seemed satisfied when reviled and cast off by others; and this his satisfaction redoubled, in proportion to the rudeness of the treatment he met with. For the same reason, he seemed to rejoice at the most excruciating pains, esteeming them as a participa-

tion of the sufferings of Christ. Thus the memory of what our blessed Saviour underwent, gave a constant seasoning to his sufferings, which he deemed small and inconsiderable, because they fell short of what he contemplated in him, and far below the desire he had formed in his own heart of suffering for him.

Consider, 3d, The excessive goodness Christ shows in the holy sacrament of the eucharist was another spring and source of his love for God. "He has loved them to the end." John 13. It truly was such to Aloysius. From the first time he received this pledge of love in holy communion, which was from the hands of St. Charles Borromeo, his care, concern, and endeavour, was to live as one thoroughly sensible of so singular a favour. In the presence of the blessed sacrament, his soul melted and dissolved into the tenderest affections, and inspired all about him with the same sentiments of devotion. Three whole days were employed for the due receiving of so great a guest, and as many in returning thanks for so kind a visit, so excessive a bounty. Whenever he approached to this divine mystery he melted into tears; he humbled and annihilated himself in his presence, and commonly spent two hours in adoration after communion.

REFLECTIONS AND RESOLUTIONS,

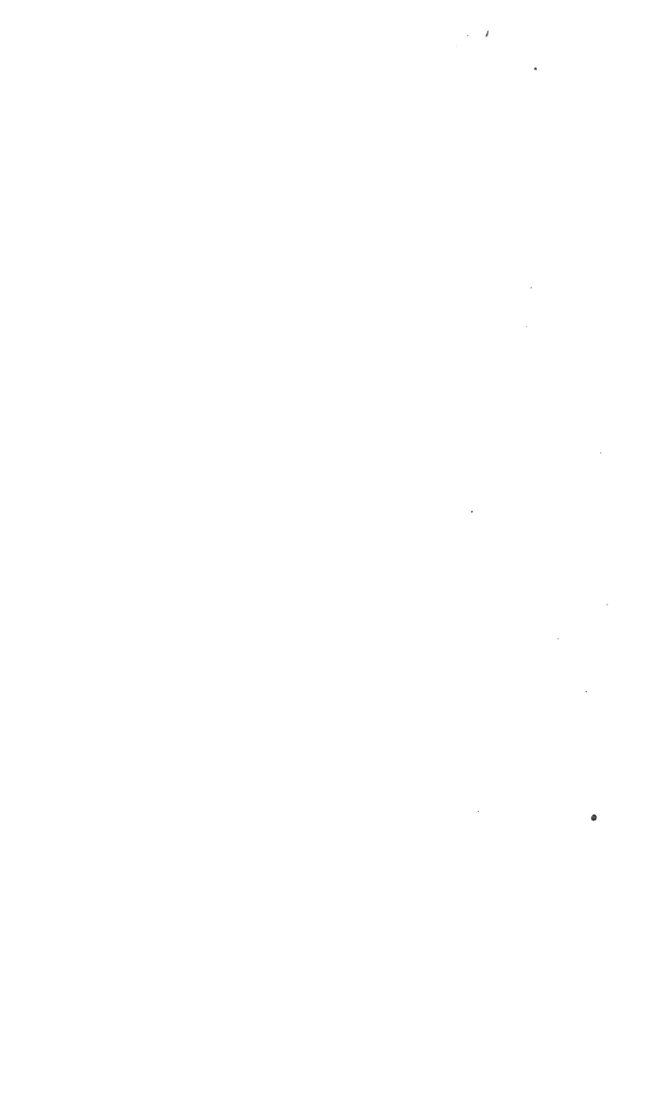
For the sixth week's Devotion in honour of St. Aloysius.

WHO is not moved to the love of Almighty God, when he seriously considers all that God has done to gain his affections! St. Aloysius gives me a striking example how to love God. The moment St. Aloysius knew the goodness of Almighty God

in his regard, he loved him, he gave him his whole heart, and never redemanded it. The view of his crucified Saviour, his receiving him in the holy eucharist, excited in his tender heart the greatest effusions of love. I am that happy person, whose affections Almighty God demands. He wishes to make me as happy as he made St. Aloysius. Can I refuse Almighty God the affections of my heart! How can I deny my soul that happiness which will come from the loving and possessing of her Creator? Nothing can destroy my soul; she is of the same nature as God himself, and like him she will exist forever and ever! What folly then for me to please myself with the deceitful objects and projects of this world! Where are those people who delighted in the pleasures of this world, and found fault with St. Aloysius, because he loved God, and gave himself to God? The world and its vanities have long forsaken them, and have left them in eternal misery. Reflect, devout Christian, on the great disparity between St. Aloysius and those unhappy worldlings. St. Aloysius loved Almighty God, and will be happy with him forever and ever. Those worldlings despised the choice St. Aloysius made, they loved the world and its vanities; their pleasures and follies are now past, and behold them in misery for all eternity. Whoever may read and consider this, let him resolve not to make this unhappy choice. Almighty God loves you, he wishes you would love him; if you will do it, he promises you eternal felicity. Engage yourself to begin to love God, and say to yourself—to be happy I must conclude to love him, and to demonstrate my love for him by my actions; he made me for this end—I will now begin, and I will

love him at all times and in all places, that I may be secure of loving him for an endless eternity. I will often repeat, my heart, O my God, was made to love thee, and it never can be at rest but in loving and serving thee ; I put it into thy sacred hands, I wish it to remain forever in thy possession. Moreover, I seriously resolve, 1st, To make frequent acts of divine love ; they ought (if possible) to be made as frequent as the drawing of my breath. 2d, All my actions shall be accompanied with aspirations of divine love. 3d, I will strive, when occasions occur, to engage others to this heavenly practice. 4th, I will often petition the saints to obtain for me this great blessing. I will unite my acts of love to theirs ; I will at all times wish that I could love my Creator as they do. If I admit of these sentiments and correspond with them, I am certain of being happy with Almighty God and his blessed saints for an endless eternity.

THE END.



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